

Hafa Adai!

OPA surveying gov't-paid purchased, leased vehicles. **PAGE 2**
'A model public health response focused on science' **PAGE 5**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 29, 2021

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SCC supports vaxx carding

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce has expressed support for the suggestion to require certain businesses to check customers' vaccination status in order to enter a business.

In a news release yesterday from SCC president Joe C. Guerrero, it said the SCC board of directors expresses its support for events, services, and businesses to require and request a person's proof of vaccination—also called COVID-19 vaccination card—See SCC on Page 4

RELATED NEWS

US officials recommend shorter COVID isolation, quarantine. **PAGE 12**

70 new cases; 2,009 recovered; 13 hospitalized

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Fresh on the heels of confirming the CNMI's 12th COVID-19-related death, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. late Monday night reported that 70 new cases of

COVID-19 were confirmed on Dec. 24 and Dec. 26, bringing the CNMI's total to 2,963.

Of the 70, 24 were confirmed on Dec. 24 and 46 were confirmed on Dec. 26. The new cases have since been isolated and are

being actively monitored, said CHCC.

In related news, as of Dec. 26, a total of 2,009 individuals have recovered from COVID-19 infection, according to CHCC. Of the cases identified since Oct. 28 this year,

See CASES on Page 4

Omicron results in TRIP cancellations

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As a result of the continued spread of the omicron variant of COVID-19, a concerning number of Travel Investment



Iakopo

Resumption Plan, or TRIP, passengers have cancelled their bookings, according to the Marianas Visitors

Authority.

In a statement from MVA managing director Priscilla Iakopo, she reported about

See OMICRON on Page 4



ADOPT-A-MEDIAN

Life In The Son Christian Fellowship volunteers complete an Adopt-A-Median project in Gualo Rai from the church to across the U.S. District Court building in the early part of this month. The group water blasted and repainted the medians and sidewalks. As 2021 comes to a close, the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers recognizes and thanks its Public Private Partnership Partners for refurbishing medians throughout Saipan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Story on Page 7

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:15pm, Dec. 28, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **94%**

Days since last community transmission **2**

| Pfizer/BioNTech | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Initiated: | 36,548 |
| Fully Vaccinated: | 34,544 |
| Moderna | |
| Initiated: | 5,277 |
| Fully Vaccinated: | 4,847 |
| Janssen | |
| Fully vaccinated: | 1,117 |

| GUAM | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|-----------|--------|-----|--------|
| Positive | 19,458 | 43 | 19,501 |
| Recovered | 18,949 | 7 | 18,956 |
| Active | 232 | 43 | 275 |
| Deaths | 270 | 0 | 270 |

| SAIPAN | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|-------|-----|-------|
| Positive | 2,893 | 70 | 2,963 |
| Traced via Travel Screening | 305 | 3 | 308 |
| Traced via Community Screening | 2,588 | 67 | 2,655 |
| Deaths | 12 | 0 | 12 |

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: [vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/](https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/)

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Triple J announces the hiring of Jose Mafnas Jr. as the company's new corporate counsel.

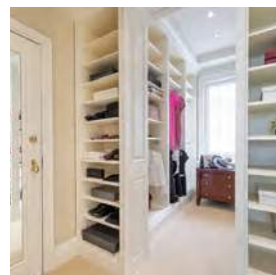
PAGE 11



NATION

Severe weather sweeping parts of the U.S. brought frigid temperatures and unseasonable warmth.

PAGE 12



GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

When it comes to closets, organization is often top of mind. But where do you start?

PAGE 14



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GOT A NEWS TIP?

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Local

OPA surveying gov't-paid purchased, leased vehicles

» **Except for 3 representatives, all House members have government-leased vehicles**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Office of the Public Au-

ditor has requested assistance from House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) for

information whether individual House members have purchased or leased a vehicle paid for by government funds, as part of OPA's survey.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiry, Public Auditor Kina B. Peter said yesterday that their office is conducting a vehicle survey for new purchased/leased vehicles.

"This is not the first time," Peter said.

She was unable to provide more information as they are in the midst of their audit activity. "We will be issuing a report in the next week or so pending responses from the agencies we have reached out to," Peter added.

In her letter to Villagomez dated Dec. 1, 2021, Peter requested assistance to obtain a listing whether individual House members have purchased or leased a vehicle paid for by government money.

When asked about this, Villagomez said yesterday that, according to OPA, it's part of their scope of work so they just complied.

The list that Villagomez provided to Peter last Dec. 7 shows that except for Reps. Vicente C. Camacho (D-Saipan), Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), and Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan), all House

members have leased vehicles using government funds.

Villagomez has a 2018 Nissan Frontier; vice speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan), a 2019 Nissan Frontier; floor leader Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan), 2019 Honda Ridgeline; Roy A. Ada (R-Saipan), a 2020 Nissan Frontier; Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), a 2020 Honda Pilot; Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan), a 2020 Honda CRV; and Joel C. Camacho (Ind-Saipan), a 2020 Nissan Frontier.

Angel Demapan (R-Saipan) has a 2021 Hyundai Palisade; Joseph Flores (Ind-Saipan), a 2019 Nissan Frontier; Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan), a 2020 Nissan Frontier; Richard T. Lizama (D-Saipan), a 2019 Nissan Frontier; Corina L. Magofna (D-Saipan), a 2020 Ford Ranger; Donald Magofna (Ind-Rota), a 2021 Nissan Rogue; John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan), a 2019 Nissan Frontier; Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian), a 2021 Nissan Rogue; Leila C. Staffler (D-Saipan), a 2019 Nissan Frontier; and Denita K. Yangetmai (D-Saipan) has two—a 2020 Nissan Frontier and 2021 Hyundai Flatbed Truck.

As of press time yesterday, *Saipan Tribune* was still trying to get the Senate's own list.

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SMLC donates \$820 for Typhoon Odette victims

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Marianas Lions Club has donated \$820 to those affected by Super Typhoon Rai, better known as Typhoon Odette in the Philippines.

In an email yesterday from SMLC immediate past president Ladyvir Canape, she said the \$820 was converted to 40,374 Philippine pesos through Rustans LLC, and was sent to Mary Ann Madriaga, a former SMLC member who happens to be from Surigao City, last Dec. 14. The city is one of the regions most devastated by the typhoon.

The funds are intended for those in the Surigao City, Siargao, and Daraga regions and will be used for purchasing solar lights, medicine, and drinking water, said Canape.

Canape added in her email that Madriaga is currently a member of the Batangas Saudi 101 Lion Club, and that the \$820 donation was possible through a collaboration between the club and SMLC.

As to how the \$820 was pooled, Canape said the

money came from past SMLC fundraising activities and from personal donations by SMLC members and officers. The SMLC members and officers Canape recognized in her email included SMLC president Lolly Velasco, vice president Dyna Cabrera, and members Marlyn Dougherty, Agnes Camacho, Daisy Geron, and Jhun Canape.

Canape also thanked Precy Cruz of Rustans LLC for helping SMLC with the donation.

For Canape and SMLC, she said it was sad to see her fellow compatriots go through hardships because of Typhoon Odette, especially during the holiday season.

“It’s so sad to know that our *kababayans* [compatriots] in the southern part of the Philippines are suffering during [the] holidays, [and] that is why we sent whatever help we can extend right away,” she said.

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| Laundry Attendant | Hotel Services Agents | Demi Chef |
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Man accused of raping a minor to plead guilty

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

A man accused of raping a 12-year-old girl on church grounds is set to plead guilty to assault and battery charges.

John Timothy Villasis Vergara, now 19, who was initially charged with sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree and sexual assault in the first degree, has agreed to plead guilty to the amended charges, which now only includes assault and battery.

However, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho has raised a few concerns before he accepts the plea agreement. One of the judge's concerns was the exclusion of registering as a sex offender as one of the conditions under the

plea agreement.

"As the factual basis contains language of a sexual nature, the plea agreement appears to not contain a condition for the defendant to register as a sex offender," he said.

Camacho ordered the parties to file a written response addressing this issue, among others, on or before Monday, Jan. 3, 2022, and explain why the court should accept the plea agreement. Vergara's change of plea hearing remains set for Jan. 5, 2022, at 10am.

In addition to the exclusion of registering as a sex offender, the court also wants the parties to address whether the minor's parents have been informed of the terms of the plea agreement and their position on the terms.

"The alleged victim is a 13-year-old minor. The plea agreement indicates that the alleged victim has been contacted as to the terms of the plea agreement. Because the victim is a minor, the court wants to know if the parents of the alleged victim have been informed about the terms of the plea agreement and what is the parents' position regarding the terms of the plea agreement," he said.

Also, the court wants the parties to address the requirement of a mandatory sentence.

"The factual basis of the plea agreement indicates grounds for 6 CMC §1308(a)(1) and requires a mandatory sentence—6 CMC §1308(b)," the judge said.

According to court documents, back in June, Vergara was arrested

on the charge of sexually assaulting a then 12-year-old girl inside the restroom of Jesus is Lord Church.

Because he was 18 at the time of the arrest, he was initially charged with sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree and sexual assault in the first degree.

On Dec. 13, the Office of the Attorney General requested to amend the charging document against Vergara to drop all serious sex offenses.

After the court granted the amendment, Vergara is now only charged with one count of assault and battery. The charge carries a maximum sentence up to one year and \$1,000 fine, or both.

Based on information of the plea agreement, if the court accepts his guilty plea, Vergara will be sentenced to a one-year imprisonment term, all suspended except for four days. He will also be given credit for the four days he has already served.

Because he will not be serving jail time, Vergara will be placed on a two-year probation upon the court's acceptance of the plea agreement.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Vergara allegedly raped the

victim on two occasions: at a birthday party in Micro Beach back in August 2020, and in the restroom of the Jesus is Lord Church last June 2 during a church anniversary practice.

During an interview with the victim's mother last June 8, she told DPS investigators that Vergara raped her daughter for the second time in the church's restroom during a church anniversary practice.

The following day, June 9, a DPS investigator attended a forensic interview with the victim at the Division of Youth Services where she alleged that the second incident happened at around 7pm last June 2.

The first incident that happened on August 2020 was reported at the Commonwealth Health Center on Jan. 25. During an interview with Dr. Heather Taylor, the victim wrote on a paper that the incident happened when they were celebrating her brother's birthday at Micro Beach when she went into the ocean with her mother's friend's son, Vergara. That prompted the doctor to report the incident to DPS. It was not immediately learned why DPS did not act on the initial rape report.

'Individuals will have to apply on their own for COVID-19 funeral assistance'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program is a direct assistance, which means that individuals will have to apply on their own by calling 1-844-684-6333, according to Patrick C. Guerrero, who is the governor's authorized representative.

Guerrero said yesterday that there is no option to apply online for such funeral assistance at this time.

Guerrero shared this information on how to avail of the Federal Emergency Management Agency-spon-

sored COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program in his email to Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan).

DeLeon Guerrero inquired about the funeral assistance program following news report that the CNMI's COVID-19 related death toll has now reached 12.

The senator said she is aware that the FEMA funeral assistance is available on a reimbursement basis for up to \$9,000 to families whose loved ones died of COVID-19.

She inquired with Guerrero if his office or any CNMI government office is taking the lead on this commu-

nity need, and if none, to provide her with the FEMA point-of-contact for her further inquiry.

In his response to the senator, Guerrero said the COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program is available to applicants of the CNMI who have incurred funeral expenses due to the virus on or after Jan. 20, 2020. He said those eligible for this assistance are U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified aliens.

"In any case, if an applicant has questions about the program, they are welcome to contact our office at (670) 664-2417 and can ask for Amanda Ramon or Karmi Reyes, for which they can provide further information if needed," Guerrero said.



Guerrero

BMV license section now open

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Motor Vehicles reopened its driver's license renewal section as of last week.

According to the BMV, the bu-

reau's vehicle registration section was the only section that was open during the temporary government shutdown but, as of Dec. 20, both sections of BMV have been opened.

However, with the recent increase in COVID-19 numbers, the registration section has maintained its modi-

fied hours for pickup and drop-off to limit the crowding in the front of the building.

BMV will only accept document drop-offs from 8am to 10. Then 2pm to 4pm will be dedicated document pickup.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

OMICRON

From Page 1

27% of TRIP passengers have either canceled or postponed their trip to the CNMI.

That is roughly over 2,000 cancellations based on the projected number of TRIP participants MVA reported back in October.

"These cancellations and/or postponement are results of various factors [but] primarily fears over the omicron variant," Iakopo said.

Back in October, MVA had expected to serve roughly 7,794 TRIP participants through the end of the year via the South Korean travel bubble program. However, MVA deputy managing director Judy Torres said that, as of December, the CNMI had only served roughly a total of 4,834 TRIP participants from October to Dec. 16.

"MVA has been seeing that the spread of the new omicron variant is causing a concerning number of booking cancellations," she had said.

According to Torres' breakdown of the 4,834 TRIP participants, the CNMI had a total of 1,983 participants in October, 2,121 in November, and 730 TRIP participants from Dec. 1 to 16.

In a previous article on the *Saipan Tribune*, MVA extended the TRIP program from December to the end of January to sustain the resumption of tourism in the CNMI.

"With the successful jumpstart of the Marianas tourism economy through the TRIP program, the outlook for continued gains had been positive for the new year. This includes the anticipated doubling of flights from South Korea to Saipan from three times weekly to six times weekly beginning early January," Torres said.

With the extension of the program comes a reduction in Travel Buck incentives.

"Travel Buck incentives are to be reduced in mid-December from up to \$250-\$500/person per island to \$100/person at a flat rate. Travel Bucks, which can only be spent in the Marianas, are still necessary for the Marianas to remain competitive with competing destinations—like Guam—which are offering similar incentives but to the airlines. We plan to continue to provide PCR tests required for the passenger's return to Korea. I should note that, prior to omicron, airline incentives have not been utilized for any flight in October and November. Also on a positive note, we have been receiving some visitors who have been paying their own hotel accommodations since the hybrid-quarantine requirement under TRIP was lifted last month," she said.

SCC

From Page 1

ing—to access the venue or space.

It said this aligns with the recent suggestion by the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force to expand efforts in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and allow businesses to operate and recover during this pandemic.

In an appearance during Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' radio news briefing Tuesday last week, task force chair Warren F. Villagomez said the task force is in talks right now with the Torres administration about possibly releasing a directive regarding businesses verifying the COVID-19 vaccination of its customers.

"We see that [it] is important to continue to put out efforts [that make] sure that we're not mixing communities that are not vaccinated or not complying with our measures... to safeguard our community," he had said.

In its news release yesterday, the SSC said the COVID-19 vaccination carding has been implemented throughout jurisdictions like Guam, Hawaii, and across the United States—along with other mitigation efforts like touchless menus and

touchless payment options.

"The COVID-19 vaccination carding has been well received, successful, and has provided comfort and reassurance on initiatives taken to protect patrons and the general community in many areas. For this reason, SCC supports this mitigation effort," the news release states.

Such events, services and businesses referred to are listed, but not limited to the following:

- Indoor events (concerts, organized parties, conferences, trade fairs and workshops, etc.);
- Restaurants and cafes that offer indoor and outdoor dining/table service. This means any service to a customer at their seat, or from anywhere but behind a counter;
- Pubs, bars and lounges (indoor and outdoor dining);
- Nightclubs, casinos and movie theaters;
- Indoor organized group recreational classes and activities;
- Indoor ticketed sporting events;
- Indoor adult group and team sports;
- Indoor skating rinks;
- Businesses offering indoor exercise/fitness; and
- Gyms, exercise and dance facilities or studios. (*Saipan Tribune*)

CASES

From Page 1

there are currently 654 active cases and nine fatalities.

CHCC also reported that, as of Dec. 27, there were 13 active hospitalizations as a result of COVID-19. By vaccination status, 10 are unvaccinated and three vaccinated. Two of the 12 are on a ventilator and one patient was discharged.

Of the 70 newest positive cases, 55 were found through contact tracing, 14 through community testing, and one through travel testing. CHCC

said the vaccination statuses of the 70 were pending verification as of Monday night.

The CNMI's vaccination rate now stands at 94%. Registering to receive COVID-19 vaccines can be done at www.vaccinatecnmi.com.

For COVID-19 testing efforts, CHCC reported that 215 tests were conducted on Dec. 26 comprising travel and surveillance testing but not including numbers from COVID-19 antigen testing conducted by the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services. Registering for testing can be done at <https://covid-testing.chcc.health>.

'A model public health response focused on science'

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Dr. Ali Khan of the World Health Organization has lauded the CNMI's healthcare partners and community for acting collectively in the efforts against COVID-19.

During a guest appearance

on a virtual news briefing on Monday, Khan, who is a medical epidemiologist and a WHO consultant, said that what he has seen "is a model public health response" focused on science.

"The community [is] working together, and there's great evidence of that, not just in

the vaccination numbers, but as I roam the streets and see all these stores and indoor places [with] everybody wearing masks. It's really been an excellent response so far," he said.

Khan arrived in the CNMI last week and will be providing his expertise and working

closely with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

Khan noted that there is still more work to be done through vaccinations. According to the www.vaccinatecnmi.com dashboard, 94% of the CNMI's eligible population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, with the remaining 6% made up of individuals who have received a first dose of a COVID-19 shot and have not received a second dose yet, and unvaccinated individuals.

Getting more eligible individuals vaccinated against COVID-19, Khan said, is crucial

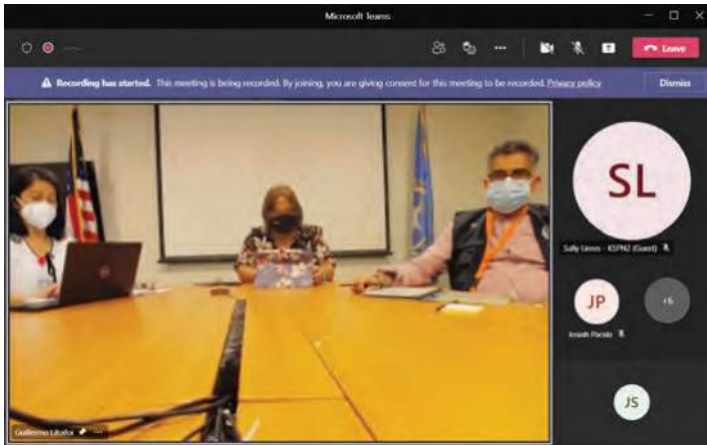
to keeping COVID-19-related hospitalizations down and preventing COVID-19 from further disrupting people's lives. Khan made clear that the COVID-19 virus itself "isn't going anywhere" but that vaccinations are key to ending the pandemic. Khan assured that COVID-19 vaccines are safe, and that there is ample data and research on them.

"The end of this pandemic—not the end of COVID because it's not going to go anywhere—...is vaccinations. ... Vaccines [are] safe, effective, and it's free, and now we've

had over eight billion doses given worldwide so we have lots of data on the safety of the vaccine," said Khan.

Through a collaboration between CHCC and the CNMI Public School System, Khan was brought on yesterday to present to and talk with PSS stakeholders about the safety and importance of reopening schools for in-person learning.

The presentation was conducted through Zoom and was livestreamed on PSS' Facebook page. The recording of the presentation can be found on PSS' Facebook page as well.



Medical epidemiologist and consultant for the World Health Organization Dr. Ali Khan, right-most, participates in a virtual news briefing held on Monday. Also in this screengrab, from left, is Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. pharmacy manager Rodylyn Bacani and CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Tinian Municipal Council resolution clarifies budget authority

The 18th Tinian Municipal Council has passed a resolution to “officially memorialize the process in which the Tinian Municipal Council will act pursuant its authority granted in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Constitution.”

The resolution, which the municipal council passed on Dec. 16, outlined all its authority constitutionally granted and prescribed how it will procedurally act pursuant to the CNMI Constitution.

Juanita M. Mendiola, who chairs the municipal council’s Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee, said: “I understand that one of the ambiguous substantive provision in the Constitution is the question of whether or not the council is authorized to approve proposed budgets by the mayor. Unfortunately, we received legal advice stating that the council is not specifically granted approval authority, but I feel we can bypass that by

adding the procedural mechanism to make sure that the council is allowed to review and approve budget proposals by locking in on the specific authority to reprogram funds on appropriated budgets by requiring review and approval.”

Municipal Council chair Joseph E. Santos said, “It is not only difficult to justify but also illogical to approve reprogramming requests on budgets that the council didn’t review and approve. It is like blindly approving movements

of funding without knowing anything about how it got there and why they are being moved from one account to another. We need to be a part of reviewing and approving budget proposals so we can make legitimate decisions whether to approve or deny reprogramming requests. This process will also provide the council with records to moni-

tor reprogramming so we can have some comparable data to rely on when reviewing the next budget request.”

Although council vice chair Thomasa P. Mendiola was

off island and wasn’t able to attend the session, she did inform the council through email communications prior to the session that she supports the resolution. **(PR)**

CEDA urged to create program to help businesses using ARPA funds

Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) pre-filed yesterday a resolution requesting the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority to work with the Office of the Governor in creating a program using American Rescue Plan Act funds to provide financial assistance to businesses in the CNMI.

DeLeon Guerrero stated in her Senate Resolution 22-13

that Section 602 of ARPA allocated \$40 million and \$60 million in fiscal years 2021 and 2022 respectively, for households, small businesses, nonprofits, and tourism, travel and hospitality.

She said the businesses in the CNMI need assistance to support their survival and their ability to generate growth by reopening their doors and providing employment opportunities.

The CNMI has been in state of public health emergency

in response to the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020.

DeLeon Guerrero said certain industries, mostly those that are directly or indirectly linked to the CNMI’s tourism industry, suffered even greater levels of business interruptions. She said a much greater portion of the unemployed individuals are those who were working for businesses that are directly or indirectly connected to the tourism industry.

The senator said CEDA must explore a financial assistance program focused on those businesses that have experienced extreme levels of pandemic-related business interruptions.

She noted that Guam, through an executive order, established the Local Employers’ Assistance Program to provide direct financial assistance to local small businesses. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**



DeLeon Guerrero



ASIAN CUISINE

On Christmas Eve, the East Moon restaurant of Kensington Hotel Saipan will be preparing an array of authentic Asian cuisine, featuring its famous Peking Duck.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Small craft urged to avoid navigation

A small craft advisory remains in effect in the CNMI until 6am Thursday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, northeast winds of 20 to 25 knots and seas of 8 to 11 feet will be present in Marianas coastal waters through 6am Thursday.

Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in these hazardous conditions. **(PR)**



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-001

KOBLERVILLE SEWERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Koblerville Sewerline Extension Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of gravity sewer main, new service laterals, connection to existing service laterals, and the installation of sewer manholes.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-IFB-22-001, Koblerville Sewer Line Extension Project”** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 11, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of **fifteen percent (15%)** of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Performance Bond of **one hundred percent (100%)** of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC. A Payment Bond of **one hundred percent (100%)** of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract may be contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission’s (CPUC) approval. If CPUC approval is required, the contract will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 30, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC’s Procurement & Supply, Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer for Water/Wastewater via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Joel Puyat, Engineer via email at joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior, Administrative Technician via email address at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22 – 035

Opening Date: December 16, 2021
Closing Date: December 30, 2021

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| POSITION TITLE: | Trades Technician: Mechanic |
| DEPARTMENT: | Power Generation Division |
| LOCATION: | Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA |
| ANNUAL SALARY: | \$22,193.60 to \$28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt |
| CONTRACT: | Not Contracted |
| POSITION(S): | One (1) |

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the Power Generation Division.

Duties:

- Performs maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs in assigned area of responsibility;
- Provides technical guidance regarding assigned functions; and ensures quality service levels in accordance with proper procedures;
- Provide assistance in monitoring and complying with regulatory compliance; operates specialized and heavy equipment; performs maintenance activities and skilled repairs to equipment, infrastructure and/or other items of assigned area of responsibility; identifies issues and operational concerns;
- Performs analysis, maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs of 8 megawatt, 13 megawatt Mitsubishi-MAN diesel engines to include engine auxiliary equipment in the main Power Plant and provide the same services on the small Power Plant with 2.5 megawatt Electromotive Division (EMD) units.
- Ensures work is within Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) engineering specifications and quality levels.
- Performs inspections; provides troubleshooting; evaluates corrective measures or options; recommends and implements solutions and corrective actions;
- Receives trouble calls; responds to requests and provides information or status updates. Initiates requests for the replenishment of materials and supplies; cleans, organizes and maintains work and supply areas;
- Analyzes readings of equipment; maintains records, logs, orders, data, and prepares reports;
- Perform reconditioning of used parts;
- Perform alignment of pumps and motors at auxiliary sites; Bending, cutting, grinding and fabricating various types of materials;
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education. Graduate from a Vocational/Technical Institution as a Mechanic or related field. Must demonstrate having had (A) 4 years of increasingly responsible experience performing mechanic duties on 1500 HP or larger diesel prime mover engines and associated auxiliary units. Experience on Mitsubishi MAN, EMD, Cummins and/or Nordberg diesel engines desired but not required.

Knowledge of: Mechanical principles, practices and procedures of assigned service area; Mathematical concepts; Inspection procedures; Safety procedures and safe work practices;

Skills in: Performing skilled maintenance, operations and repair work of various plant systems; Operating specialized and heavy equipment; Monitoring equipment and making adjustments; Performing inspections and identifying issues; Troubleshooting issues and recommending or implementing solutions; Receiving requests and trouble calls and providing assistance; Initiating supply requests; Taking equipment readings and maintaining historical data; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities.

Physical Demands:

- Able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending.
- Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles.
- Work primarily inside around machinery in operation; in varying degree of temperature in tight or cramped (confined) work spaces, at heights, on ladders or scaffolds, and on slippery or uneven walking surfaces in close proximity to high and low voltage circuits and climbs stairs frequently.
- Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday and Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P.O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Groups complete Adopt-A-Median projects in Saipan villages

As 2021 comes to a close, the Governor’s Council of Economic Advisers recognizes and thanks its Public Private Partnership Partners for refurbishing medians throughout Saipan. The projects, completed under the Adopt-A-Median Program, gave streets, medians, curbs, and barriers much-needed facelifts and significantly improved safety and visibility for motorists and pedestrians. GCEA extends a *si yu’us ma’ase’* and *ghilisow* to the following Adopt-A-Median partners:

- Century Tours
- D&Q International Distributors
- Life In The Son Christian Fellowship
- POI Aviation
- Saipan Marianas Lions Club
- Tan Holdings Football Club
- Team Chalan Piao—the families of community leaders Catherine Attao, Joe Guerrero, Chris Concepcion, and Sean White

On Oct. 28, POI Aviation, Century Tours, and the staff and management from Century Hotel, Seatouch, and iSHOP partnered to transform the Kagman intersection medians located across the Mobil Kagman Gas Station.

A few days later, on Oct. 31, the Saipan Marianas Lions Club cleaned and repainted the medians in Chalan Kiya that run along the intersection by the old Payless Shoe Store to the Chalan Kiya Mobil Gas Station intersection. Also on Oct. 31, the Tan Holdings Football Club cleaned and repainted the medians in Susupe along the roadway from Marianas High School to Guma Hustisia.

From Nov. 4-6, Team Chalan Piao water blasted, cleaned, and repainted the Chalan Piao Medians from the intersection at the Division of Youth Services to the Chalan Piao Mobil Gas Station.

On Nov. 8, D&Q International Distributors spruced up the Sadog Tasi Intersection medians and repainted the

» 2022 Adopt-A-Median projects announced

highly used area with bright yellow paint. For two days, from Dec. 4-5, volunteers from Life In The Son Christian Fellowship water blasted and repainted the Gualo Rai medians and sidewalks that run from the church and across the U.S. District Court.

Other projects completed
GCEA would also like to recognize its partnership with the Kanoa Football Club, Beach Road Tourism Development, Office of House Minority, LJ’s Lawncare, Saipan Mayor’s Office, Shirley’s Coffee Shop, and the Shirley’s Football Club for the completion of their Adopt-A-Median projects in the villages of Garapan, San Vicente, and San Jose. GCEA thanks its partners for an outstanding Adopt-A-Median year!

Projects planned for 2022
In 2022, elementary through high schools and the Northern Marianas College will be participating in the Adopt-A-Media Program. The following schools and NMC have committed to the following projects in the first quarter of 2022:

- Kagman Elementary School students have signed up to adopt the Kagman Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services sidewalk and the Laolao Bay Golf Resort sidewalks.
- Marianas High School will adopt the Marianas Visitors Authority sidewalks, Susupe medians across Saipan World Resort, Mt. Carmel sidewalks, and the Dandan Children’s Park parking lot.
- NMCE will be working on the Chalan Monsignor Guerrero medians.
- Sinapalo Elementary School will be refreshing its school parking lot and entrance.
- Tinian Elementary

School has adopted the sidewalks around its campus located across the public library and hospital.

About
The Adopt-A-Median program is an integral part of the GCEA’s Marianas Village Pride campaign and the Public Private Partnership Program. GCEA is accepting registration for projects in every village on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. Schools, groups, families, and businesses can adopt, clean, and paint medians, sidewalks, or crosswalks in their villages. GCEA will provide the supplies. For the safety of the students, GCEA recommend that school groups adopt sidewalks and crosswalks around their schools.


For more information or to sign up for the Adopt-A-Median program or other Marianas Village Pride contests, visit the GCEA website at cnmieconomy.com or contact the council at gceacnmi@gmail.com. GCEA invites the community to engage, like, and share its MVP content on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmieconomy) and to tag MVP-related photos to be featured on GCEA’s platforms (#BeAnMVP, #MarianasVillagePride, and #TogetherWeCanMarianas).

About the GCEA
The Governor’s Council of Economic Advisers’ mission is to provide objective advice to CNMI Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios to ensure that future economic decisions and programs are aligned to improve the quality of life throughout The Marianas. GCEA’s Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative has drawn widespread support throughout the community. Volunteers and partners are welcome. For more information, visit cnmieconomy.com or engage with the GCEA on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy) or by email at gceacnmi@gmail.com. (PR)



On Oct. 28, 2021, volunteers from POI Aviation, Century Tours, and the staff and management from Century Hotel, Seatouch, and iSHOP joined together to spruce up the Kagman intersection medians across the Mobil Kagman gas station.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.net>

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

COMBINED NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan, MP 96950Tel: (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after January 13, 2022, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Honolulu Field Office, for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383), as amended, to undertake the following projects and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

| Project Activity/Type: | Purpose: | Location: | Total Project Cost: |
|--|---|------------------|---------------------|
| Tinian Children Park Improvement Project | Revitalize and enhance the park to be accessible for the entire community of Tinian for recreational purposes | San, Jose Tinian | \$275,000.00 |

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Central Office in Garapan, Saipan and may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the projects may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 or direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan. All comments received by **January 12, 2022, 4:30 p.m.**, will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commentors should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD Honolulu Field Office that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Ralph DLG. Torres consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of **fifteen (15) days** following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Honolulu Field Office by email to CPDHonolulu@hud.gov and CPD_COVID-19OEE-HNL@hud.gov. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Ralph DLG Torres
Governor, CNMI

Public warned of high surf, rip currents

The public is being warned of large breaking waves up to 10 feet and dangerous rip currents on Saipan, Tinian, Rota. A high surf advisory is in effect from 6pm last night to 6am Thursday. There is also a high risk of rip currents from 6pm last night through tonight, Wednesday. Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, north,

east, and west facing reefs will have high rip current risk, while north and west facing reefs will have large breaking waves up to 10 feet. These conditions will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. A long-period northwest and a northeast trade-wind swell will increase, causing surf to build along all but

south facing reefs. Surf will fall Wednesday night into Thursday. The public is advised to avoid venturing toward north, east, and west facing reefs. Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don’t swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. (PR)

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

What we learned: 2021 filled with hard lessons

Painful lessons are the hardest ones to forget, and 2021 delivered many indelible teachings.

We learned that when angry people are fed a steady diet of vicious falsehoods that their nation is being stolen from under their very noses, when they are told that the definition of heroism is rising to overturn the results of a free and fair election, they will go to disgusting and deadly lengths—overrunning the house of American democracy.

We learned that even a lame-duck president in his waning days can be dangerous. In fact, it's when an amoral narcissist is unbridled that he may do the most damage.

We learned that cynical mischief-makers and true believers in corrosive lies will lay down on the tracks of the American judicial system to prevent the whole truth from surfacing about one of the country's darkest days.

We learned that a new president can change many things, restoring a guiding sense of sanity and decency in Washington. But even a responsible and experienced man at the helm cannot reverse the madness that has taken hold of the American mind, nor can he cure a wide range of ailments afflicting the nation.

We learned that even an experienced foreign policy hand with the right overarching idea can, through abysmal planning, utterly botch the ending of America's longest war, doing lasting harm to America in the world.

We learned that a virus named after 2019, which killed 385,000 of us in 2020, could become even deadlier in 2021, now claiming the lives of more than 800,000 fellow Americans and more than 60,000 fellow New Yorkers.

We learned that even if government's approach mutates as the virus mutates, trillions of virions have a terrible collective mind of their own, and will find our vulnerabilities, wherever they are.

We learned that vaccines produced in record time thanks in no small part to the previous president can deliver remarkable protection. And despite early slips, we learned that those vaccines can make their way into arms by the millions quite quickly. With a small pinch, at no cost, with great ease, Americans could protect themselves from the worst pandemic in generations.

We learned that despite overwhelming evidence that a couple of shots and a simple cloth or paper mask can prevent illness and death and spread of a nasty bug, millions of our neighbors, so hunkered down in their reflexive rejection of authority they will even gamble their lives in a swaggering show of stubbornness, will continue to leave themselves and their families at risk.

We learned that a governor who had commanded the Empire State's political stage as few before him had ever done, ruling both with cunning and savvy and intimidation and seeing us through the darkest days of the pandemic, could be undone in the course of a few weeks. We learned that even as he howled about procedural missteps in the investigation that led to his downfall, there was no denying he had made

See LESSONS on Next Page



Through compassion we can transform the current culture war

By **DAVID CAMPT** and **ALLISON MAHALEY**
THE FULCRUM

America is immersed in a culture war that is a new manifestation of its age-old problem with race. School board meetings across America have devolved into ugly protests about critical race theory. The strategy to rebrand CRT was created, organized and executed intentionally as a political wedge issue. Right-wing operative Christopher Rufo publicly admitted: "We have decodified the term and will recodify it to annex the entire range of cultural constructions that are unpopular with Americans."

CRT, like all wedge issues, is forcing the public into binary thinking, further polarizing the right against the left. Anti-racism allies on the left have made things worse by belittling the arguments, defending CRT and ultimately adding to the already dangerous polarization of our country. Instead of this divisive debate, what is needed is a nuanced dialogue grounded in compassion, one that can surface legitimate concerns on both sides.

One key claim of the anti-CRT operatives is that some K-12 educators are required to teach children that all white people—and America itself—are irredeemably racist. Most people, unless they are among the most hyper-woke activists, bristle at this assertion. Why? Because America learned during the civil rights movement that being racist was wrong—so wrong that, today, even the Ku Klux Klan denies that it is a racist organization; now, its members describe themselves as simply pro-white. Even those on the left who agree that racism in America was and is an acute problem feel uneasy about burdening their children with debilitating "white privilege" guilt.

Amid the melee, this anxiety is being funneled into local and state elections. Activists on the right hope to build more momentum toward the U.S. House and Senate elections in 2022. As we saw in Virginia's gubernatorial race, using CRT as a weaponized wedge issue works. So instead of fighting harder, adding to the dangerous polarization, we suggest people who consider themselves anti-racist shift the focus and instead ask: "What should we teach our children about race and racism?"

This question is actually a very useful conversation for Americans to have. This will require some very different behaviors, particularly by people on the left who claim to deplore all matters of violence. In fact, people on the left (and anyone who is tired of endless divisive culture wars) need to embody non-violence in their communication style and end these bitter and divisive debates.

How do they do that?

Start with ginning up your own compassion. Before a conversation, take active measures like deep breathing while consciously trying to transcend the frustration, anger or hatred for the "opponent."

Ask questions and listen. People often enter these conversations with preconceived notions of how people on the other side think. In addition to their opinion, ask them to tell you about an experience they had that led to that conclusion. Conversations focused on experiences beneath opinions create more interpersonal connections than ones based solely on opinions.

Look for common ground, especially around values and goals. People on the right and the left want their children to love our country. Each side wants America to be great. Highlighting what you have in common builds trust and the possibility of influencing each other.

Be honest about our racial predicament. Acknowledge that sometimes people accuse each other of racism too quickly and harshly. Admit that sometimes people's discomfort about racism causes them to downplay the role that racism has always played in America's journey. Most importantly, admit that racism is still a problem because you sometimes notice yourself having racist thoughts and feelings, even though you usually don't tell anyone. Invite others to do the same as part of more honestly analyzing our racial situation.

In addition to diffusing the CRT argument, engaging in ways that allow opposing sides to talk openly and candidly (ideally in small groups) about their fears, hopes and values will lead to better curriculum choices. School boards and superintendents need to create settings where people can actually talk to each other instead of just managing the circus of public comments at meetings. Public officials and non-educational civic organizations need to plan public engagement events for dialogue. We need many groups—including churches—inviting people to dialogues not about CRT but to answer the question "What should we teach children about race?"

We can expect to see political operatives on the right continuing to focus on critical race theory as a wedge issue in a culture war. Anyone who considers themselves opposed to racism can use compassion to transform this culture war and create a long-overdue dialogue about how people on all sides collaborate toward America's promise of equality.

David Campt, a dialogue specialist, and Allison Mahaley, an anti-racism organizer, are principals at The Dialogue Company.

I expected COVID hysteria when I traveled for Christmas. Here's what I found instead

DOYLESTOWN, Pa.—If you spend even a small amount of time scanning social media or watching cable news, the world still seems like a pretty grim place.

A new COVID variant, omicron, is now responsible for most new infections in the U.S.

Vaccine boosters don't appear to prevent transmission or symptomatic cases, though, they continue to protect against severe disease for many. And cases, even in highly vaccinated parts of the country, are spiking again.

"Should you travel for the holidays?" After such tremulous headlines, articles all seem to conclude that even if you and everyone around you is boosted and double-masked at every moment, the answer is "no."

It was within this context that I apprehensively boarded a flight from Fort Worth to the East Coast for our family Christmas celebration.

My fear, to be clear, was not for the health and safety of my nuclear family. Long ago, after hours of reading research and studying datasets, I determined we are at low risk. Nor was it for my extended family, who are either vaccinated or had COVID and recovered.

It was for what we might encounter along the way: Stern

Transportation Security Administration agents instructing my kids to keep their distance; unyielding airline personnel preparing to kick us off the flight because my 2-year-old couldn't manage to wear a mask; an air of suspicion and fear coloring every human interaction between entering security at Dallas/Fort Worth to picking up our bags in Philadelphia.

I assumed that outside my Fort Worth community, in which COVID presents a rare inconvenience but nothing to be feared, most people back east are living in a state of low-grade anxiety, their daily lives governed by the latest public guidance declaring that human interaction is a high-risk activity that should be avoided.

I was grateful to find my assumptions were wrong.

There were no sideways looks. No comments about my unmasked toddler.

Only pleasant—mostly normal—interactions with everyone around us, even in the moments that my mask had fallen below my nose.

It was a Christmas miracle.

Or maybe, it's just reality beyond the headlines.

Maybe it's because huge swaths of the population are like me and the people in my social circles. In a phrase, simply "over it."

They long ago determined that COVID is real and needs to be acknowledged but that they will no longer let relentless avoid-

Start small to change the world

As we reach the end of another tumultuous year, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Besides the ongoing pandemic and concerted assault on democracy, we've had deadly tornadoes, another mass school shooting, and a U.S. Supreme Court poised to outlaw abortion.

Such a confluence of events can make people believe it's pointless to seek change, which makes change even harder to achieve. But effective social change can start small, and lead to reasons to be optimistic.

For example, the uprisings for racial justice in the summer of 2020 have been called the largest social movement in U.S. history. After more than a decade of protests, led by Indigenous activists, the Keystone XL pipeline was shut down. And organized labor has seen an uptick in strikes and unionizing from workers in tech, media and higher education.

On Dec. 9, employees at a Starbucks in Buffalo unionized. There have also been major recent protests in support of paid family leave, child care, and climate justice.

Of course, not all protests bring progress. The insurrection on Jan. 6 at the U.S. Capitol and newly revealed text messages from that day to President Donald Trump's chief of staff Mark Meadows are alarming. White supremacist movements show a dark and incredibly troubling side of protest.

As a sociology professor, I spend the semester helping students learn to see big issues and problems in society. So, by the end of the semester, they ask how to solve these issues and what are possible next steps for them to take.

Obviously, there aren't easy answers to addressing structural social problems.

The biggest piece of advice is to get involved. When things feel overwhelming, look for the people already doing the work. There are usually activists, groups and organizations working on the issues who can point out ways to support their ongoing work.

By **COLLEEN WYNN**

Progressive Perspectives

Colleen Wynn is an assistant professor of sociology and co-director of the Community Research Center at the University of Indianapolis. She is a Public Voices Fellow through The OpEd Project. This column was produced for The Progressive magazine and distributed by Tribune News Service.



History shows that sustained social movements made up of both small and large actions over time, like the civil rights movement, the women's movement and the movement for same-sex marriage, do yield change.

Starting small can include learning about an issue, then sharing that knowledge with friends, family, and your community; following organizations, activists and organizers on social media to learn more; donating resources or funds; contacting elected officials to voice opinions on issues; voting in elections; volunteering in community service; attending an event in support of a cause; and working on a political campaign. It can also mean engaging in protests.

Research shows community engagement in the classroom improves student experiences, benefits faculty and community partners, and can lead students to critically think about social change. The benefits of community engagement are not limited to college classrooms. Community engagement promotes feelings of belonging and has health benefits.

As organizer and educator Mariame Kaba, founder and director of Project NIA, a grassroots organization with a mission to end youth incarceration, often says, "Hope is a discipline."

through the pain and mayhem.

We learned that even as America could rebound economically from one of its most difficult years, New York City, ever dependent on a steady flow of tourists and commuters, would continue to struggle mightily.

We learned that when there's a will, a hopelessly divided Washington can manage to rise above rancor and get something serious done.

We learned that even after doing so, elected officials are hardwired to revert to the mean and choose division and inaction over forward motion.

We learned that after the nation's highest court has just been filled with three new right-wing justices, the investment is likely to pay dividends for those who have sought for 40 years to rewrite a seminal ruling on women's reproductive freedom. We learned that this same realignment is likely to endanger gun laws that have protected millions of New Yorkers for decades.

We learned that a planet getting hotter will deliver increasingly vicious wind and floods and fires that uproot and kill people and destroy property.

We learned that a largely trumped-up panic over the teaching of race in public schools can set off a brand new culture war.

By **CYNTHIA M. ALLEN**

Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Cynthia M. Allen is a columnist for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Readers may send her email at cmallen@star-telegram.com.



ance of it govern their lives.

The narrative that many Americans are living in constant terror of illness seem to be vastly over-represented in a national news media that relies on fearmongering to stay relevant.

Most people, even in a state like Pennsylvania, which has been extremely cautious with COVID the past two years, seem to have settled into equilibrium.

They take the precautions with which they feel comfortable and don't worry about what other people are doing.

If someone is triple-vaccinated and wants to double-mask at the grocery store, fine.

If the next person had COVID already and doesn't want one of the COVID shots, that's fine too. It's time to get on with life, even in blue-run states that have kept the reins tight.

People seem to be making preparations for Christmas celebrations like they usually do around my Pennsylvania hometown.

The local grocery store was crowded, people were queuing up at the seafood market, the liquor store was busy, and even the line for confession snaked around the sanctuary at the Catholic church my family attends.

No one seems to care about their neighbors' vaccine status.

But they seem eager to exchange a smile and a kind word, which even our president can't seem to muster these days when he talks about those who decide against vaccination.

It is refreshing. It is normal. It's what the holidays are supposed to be.

It's not what the headlines will tell you, but that's what I found traveling this Christmas.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Open letter to House Speaker Villagomez

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I write this letter to ask you and the Democrat-led House of Representative: Why did you people reject the hardworking governor's request to give retirees their bonus?

The Democrats have said repeatedly that they represent the people's interest. Whose interest are you guys representing when you did not allow the governor to give us our bonus? We, the retirees, are asking you and the Democrat-led Legislature to allow our hardworking governor to give us our bonus. We need our bonus, Mr. Speaker.

It is apparent that impeaching the governor is more important for you guys than assisting the retirees and the people of the CNMI. Let me remind you that even Judge Tydingco-Gatewood has expressed how pleased she is with how our governor has protected the retirees.

Joseph Duenas

Afetas, Saipan

LESSONS

From Page 8

the work lives of too many women in his orbit utterly untenable.

We learned that a book worth more than \$5 million to him wasn't worth much at all to the public, and likely wasn't worth the headaches it would go on to produce.

We learned that there's no level of incompetence to which the city's Board of Elections cannot sink, even as it implements a new voting system designed to increase trust and participation in our local democracy.

We learned that as one mayor ended his term, showing strength on a public-health crisis while limping to the finish line in too many other areas, the city—or at least the small sliver of voters who turned out to vote—wanted someone to put pragmatism and public safety before purist progressive ideology.

We learned that the spasm of shootings and killings that seemed like an anomaly in 2020 was in fact a bloody trendline, and while New York's slide back toward violence did not come close to what other cities experienced, nor did it drag Gotham back to its worst old days, that was cold comfort to those living

We learned that, seemingly out of nowhere, in 2021 America, condominiums can collapse.

We learned that supply chains we've long taken for granted can break as easily as the paper chains children make for Christmas trees.






We learned that even Olympic champions renowned for their strength and poise are vulnerable people entitled to the benefit of the doubt, and to the right to bow out for their own health when they need to.

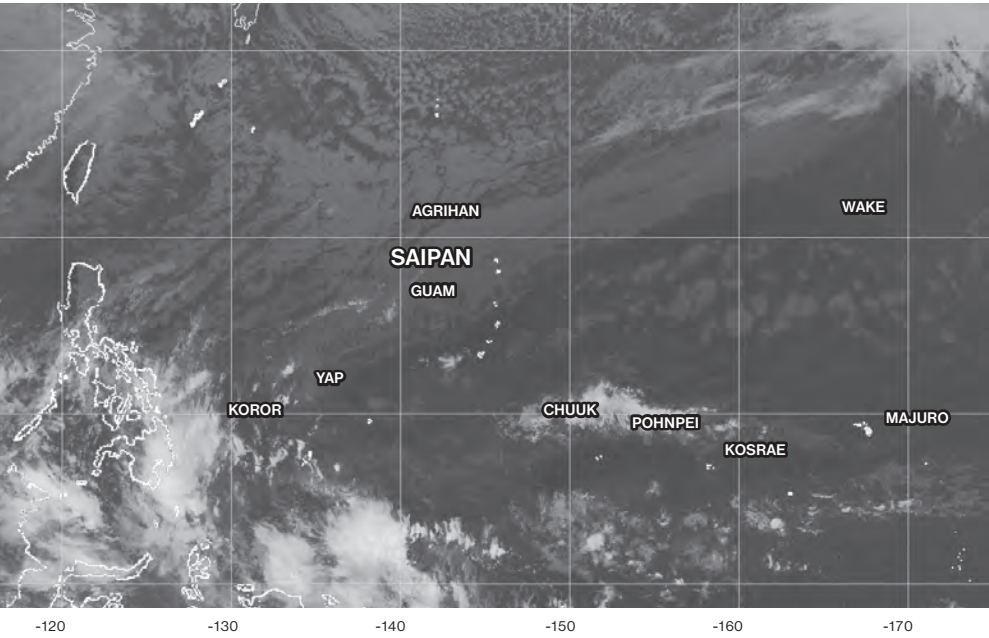
We learned that there can indeed be justice in our courts after police officers and vigilantes murder Black men, but that verdicts are not grand statements on race in America; they are specific reactions by jurors to the facts and the law.

We learned, or were reminded, that the world's largest social network, which has connected billions in new and wonderful ways, can also harm mental health and threaten personal privacy and spread devious disinformation.

We learned that despite death and stress and division and disinformation and inflation, just over the horizon, requiring a telescope to see but still surely there is a future filled with hope.

The Weather

| 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|--|-----|
| TODAY | | THURSDAY | | FRIDAY | | SATURDAY | | SUNDAY | |
|  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph. | | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | | Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers. | | Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. | |
| 86° | 75° | 87° | 76° | 85° | 75° | 85° | 75° | 85° | 75° |
| YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE | | | | | | | | | |



PICTURE TIME: 6:35 AM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Northeast winds and a few showers were over the Marianas this morning. Winds will increase through the day becoming breezy by tomorrow.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

| MICRONESIA | | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|--------|
| Guam and Rota | Thunderstorms | 86° / 79° | |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | 84° / 77° | |
| Yap | Thunderstorms | 85° / 78° | |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorms | 86° / 81° | |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorms | 84° / 78° | |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorms | 85° / 78° | |
| Majuro | Thunderstorms | 83° / 80° | |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|----------|---------|---------|
| Today | 6:41 AM | 5:56 PM |
| Thursday | 6:42 AM | 5:56 PM |
| Friday | 6:41 AM | 5:57 PM |
| Saturday | 6:42 AM | 5:57 PM |
| Sunday | 6:43 AM | 5:58 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|----------|----------|---------|----------|
| Today | 1:40 AM | 1:42 PM | - |
| Thursday | 2:37 AM | 2:28 PM | - |
| Friday | 3:39 AM | 3:19 PM | - |
| Saturday | 4:45 AM | 4:17 PM | - |
| Sunday | 5:53 AM | 5:21 PM | - |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|------------------|---------------|-----------|--------|
| Auckland | Showers | 73° / 63° | |
| Beijing | Partly Cloudy | 39° / 21° | |
| Hong Kong | Cloudy | 66° / 63° | |
| Honolulu | Partly Cloudy | 78° / 68° | |
| London | Cloudy | 50° / 45° | |
| Los Angeles | Mostly Sunny | 70° / 50 | |
| Manila | Partly Cloudy | 86° / 77° | |
| Melbourne | Sunny | 84° / 64° | |
| Miami | Partly Cloudy | 78° / 69° | |
| New York | Windy | 41° / 28° | |
| Osaka | Mostly Sunny | 48° / 39° | |
| Paris | Mostly Cloudy | 46° / 43° | |
| Busan | Partly Cloudy | 46° / 28° | |
| Rome | Mostly Sunny | 57° / 46° | |
| Salem | Mostly Sunny | 50° / 32° | |
| San Francisco | Showers | 56° / 45° | |
| Seoul | Partly Cloudy | 39° / 16° | |
| Tokyo | Partly Cloudy | 48° / 36° | |
| Washington, DC | Mostly Sunny | 39° / 28° | |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | | FEET |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------|------|
| 3:33 AM | High Tide | 1.21 | |
| 8:58 AM | Low Tide | 0.61 | |
| 3:17 PM | High Tide | 1.79 | |
| 10:32 PM | Low Tide | -0.01 | |

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

| DEPARTURES | | | | ARRIVALS | | | |
|----------------------|--------|---------|---------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|------------------|
| SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) | | | | GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA117 | 7:20am | 8:05am | 2, 4, 6 | UA116 | 5:30am | 6:16am | 2, 4, 6 |
| UA117 | 9:50am | 10:35am | 1, 3, 5, 7 | UA174 | 8:00am | 8:46am | 1, 3, 5, 7 |
| GUAM-MANILA (MNL) | | | | MANILA (MNL)-GUAM | | | |
| UA183 | 8:00pm | 9:50pm | Daily | UA184 | 10:40pm | 4:30am+1 | 2, 5 |
| | | | | UA184 | 10:55pm | 4:45am+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) | | | | MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA117/183 | 7:20am | 9:50pm | 2, 4, 6 via Guam | UA184/174 | 10:40pm | 6:16am+1 | 5 via Guam |
| UA117/183 | 9:50am | 9:50pm | 1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam | UA184/174 | 10:40pm | 8:46am+1 | 2 via Guam |
| | | | | UA184/174 | 10:55pm | 6:16am+1 | 1, 3 via Guam |
| | | | | UA184/174 | 10:55pm | 8:46am+1 | 4, 6, 7 via Guam |
| SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN) | | | | INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN | | | |
| 7C3406 | 3:10PM | 6:55PM | 6 | 7C3405 | 8:30AM | 2:10PM | 6 |
| TW9308 | 3:20PM | 8:00PM | 4, 5 | OZ6233 | 9:00AM | 2:30PM | 6 |
| OZ6243 | 4:00PM | 7:40PM | 6 | TW9307 | 10:00AM | 2:20PM | 4, 5 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

| SAIPAN TO ROTA | | | | 1204 | 10:00 | 10:15 | Daily |
|------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------|---------|-------------------------|
| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY | 1205 | 11:00 | 11:15 | Daily |
| 1301 | 8:30AM | 9:00AM | Daily | 1206 | 12:00 | 12:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1302 | 11:00AM | 11:30AM | Daily | 1207 | 13:00 | 13:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1303 | 1:30PM | 2:00PM | Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily | 1208 | 14:00 | 14:15 | Daily |
| 1304 | 3:30PM | 4:00PM | Daily | 1209 | 15:00 | 15:15 | Daily |
| ROTA TO SAIPAN | | | | 1210 | 16:00 | 16:15 | Daily |
| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY | 1211 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Daily |
| 3101 | 9:30AM | 10:00AM | Daily | 1212 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 3102 | 12:00AM | 12:30AM | Daily | TINIAN TO SAIPAN | | | |
| 3103 | 1:30PM | 3:00PM | Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily | FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
| 3104 | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | Daily | 2101 | 7:30 | 7:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| ROTA TO GUAM | | | | 2102 | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY | 2103 | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 3401 | 12:15 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable | 2104 | 10:30 | 10:45 | Daily |
| GUAM TO ROTA | | | | 2105 | 11:30 | 11:45 | Daily |
| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY | 2106 | 12:30 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 4301 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Temporarily Unavailable | 2107 | 13:30 | 13:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| SAIPAN TO TINIAN | | | | 2108 | 14:30 | 14:45 | Daily |
| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY | 2109 | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 1201 | 7:00 | 7:15 | Temporarily Unavailable | 2110 | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 1202 | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily | 2111 | 17:30 | 17:45 | Daily |
| 1203 | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily | 2112 | 18:30 | 18:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

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Business

Ex-CNMI assistant AG is Triple J's new corporate counsel

Triple J announced yesterday the recent hiring of Jose Mafnas Jr. as the company's new corporate counsel, replacing Jim Stump who returned to his home state of Michigan last month after eight years in the position.

As corporate counsel, Mafnas will provide valuable counseling in planning and decision making and handle all legal responsibilities for the Triple J group of companies. He will play a key role on Triple

J's executive team, providing legal protection and services both to individual employees and the group, from legal research, insight on contracts, property laws, to government regulations and more.

With a robust legal portfolio, Mafnas brings with him valuable knowledge and experience. He was most recently CNMI assistant attorney general assigned to the Civil Litigation Division, where he represented the CNMI govern-

ment and the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. in various civil matters involving due process rights, administrative law, property rights, contract rights and other matters. Prior to his role as assistant AG, Mafnas worked for a private law firm on Saipan where his legal work included real estate transactions, appellate work, civil litigation, probate, and general legal assistance. Mafnas' legal experience also includes research work and internships



Mafnas

with the Guam Supreme Court, professor Rose Cuison-Villazor at the UC Davis School of Law, Sacramento County District Attorney's Office, and the U.S. District Courts in Guam and on Saipan.

Mafnas has a bachelor of science, magna cum laude, in Criminal Justice and Criminology from Chaminade University of Honolulu and is a graduate of the University of California, Davis School of Law. He is currently licensed

to practice law in the CNMI, Guam, and California.

"Jose has strong experience both as assistant AG for the CNMI and as an associate attorney engaging in legal matters that pertain to the industries within which our group of companies operate. He will be a key addition to our executive management team as we continue to deliver on our growth strategy as a group," said Jeff Jones, president, Triple J Enterprises, Inc. (PR)

Omicron, storms disrupt air travel for 4th consecutive day

NEW YORK (AP)—Flight cancellations that disrupted holiday travel, stretched into Monday as airlines called off more than 1,000 U.S. flights because crews were sick with COVID-19 during one of the year's busiest travel periods, and storm fronts added to the havoc.

Flight delays and cancellations tied to staffing shortages have been common this year. Airlines encouraged workers to quit in 2020, when air travel collapsed, and carriers have struggled to make up ground this year, when air travel rebounded faster than almost anyone had expected. The arrival of the omicron variant only exacerbated the problem.

"During the pandemic, we have seen experienced airline personnel leave the industry and not return across the globe," said John Grant, se-

nior analyst at travel industry research firm OAG. "Filling those skill gaps was already a challenge in the recovery before the latest variant."

But airlines' staffing levels are "irrelevant" when omicron is thrown into the mix, said Atmosphere Research Group travel industry analyst Henry Harteveldt. "We can't blame the issues we're seeing now on airlines not having enough employees to work. What we're seeing happen is the employees who were available to work have come down with COVID."

Since Friday, airlines have canceled more than 4,000 flights to, from or inside the U.S., according to FlightAware, which tracks flight cancellations.

Delta, United, JetBlue and American have blamed the coronavirus for staffing problems in the past several

days. European and Australian airlines also canceled holiday-season flights because of infected staff, but weather and other factors played a role as well.

Winter weather in the Pacific Northwest led to nearly 250 flight cancellations to or from Seattle on Sunday, according to Alaska Airlines, which expected more than 100 flight cancellations Monday. But the airline said sick crews were no longer a factor.

United said it canceled 115 flights Monday, out of more than 4,000 scheduled, due to crews with COVID-19. Delta expected to cancel more than 200 flights out of its schedule of over 4,100, after scrapping more than 370 on Sunday, citing the effect of COVID-19 on crews and winter weather in Minneapolis, Seattle and Salt Lake City.

China pursues tech 'self-reliance,' fueling global unease

BEIJING (AP)—To help make China a self-reliant "technology superpower," the ruling Communist Party is pushing the world's biggest e-commerce company to take on the tricky, expensive business of designing its own processor chips—a business unlike anything Alibaba Group has done before.

Its 3-year-old chip unit, T-Head, unveiled its third processor in October, the Yitian 710 for Alibaba's cloud computing business. Alibaba says for now, it has no plans to sell the chip to outsiders.

Other rookie chip developers including Tencent, a games and social media giant, and smartphone brand Xiaomi are pledging billions of dollars in line with official plans to create computing, clean energy and other technology that can build China's wealth and global influence.

Processor chips play an increasingly critical role in products from smartphones and

cars to medical devices and home appliances. Shortages due to the coronavirus pandemic are disrupting global manufacturing and adding to worries about supplies.

Chips are a top priority in the ruling Communist Party's marathon campaign to end China's reliance on technology from the United States, Japan and other suppliers Beijing sees as potential economic and strate-

gic rivals. If it succeeds, business and political leaders warn that might slow down innovation, disrupt global trade and make the world poorer.

"Self-reliance is the foundation for the Chinese nation," President Xi Jinping said in a speech released in March. He called for China to become a "technology superpower" to safeguard "national economic security."

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB22-CHCC/CGC-SABG-008

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JANUARY 31, 2022 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"PURCHASE OF VEHICLE"

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

Roy Rios
P.O. Box 5616 CHRB
Saipan, MP 96950
670-989-1230

Pro Se

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

In the Matter of the Petition for the Change of Name of:

Roy Roger Taisacan Rios
Petitioner

) FCD CN
) CIVIL ACTION
) NO. 21-0508

) **NOTICE OF
HEARING**

By: Jenny Maria Theresa Galang Ariar
Petitioner

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on March 28, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217A, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 14th day of December, 2021.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

Jenny Ariar
P.O. Box 504637
Saipan, MP 96950
670-285-3769

Pro Se

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

In Re the Matter of the Petition for the Appointment of General Guardianship for:

J.G.Y.A.
R.M.Y.A.
A Minor Children

) FCD-GU
) CIVIL ACTION
) NO. 21-0513

) **NOTICE OF
HEARING**

By: Jenny Maria Theresa Galang Ariar
Petitioner

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on April 11, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217A before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 17th day of December, 2021.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@plicom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 06-2021

Opening date: December 17, 2021 Closing date: January 07, 2022

Positions:

SAIPAN:

- (1) Baggage Handling Systems (BHS) Technician
- (1) General Maintenance I
- (1) Ports Police Officer I

ROTA:

- (1) Maintenance/Custodial-H (CPA Rota)
- (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance I

TINIAN:

- (1) General Maintenance I
- (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 7, 2022.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW22-ITB No.: 42200028

SUBMISSION DATE: January 27, 2022 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Route 323, Industrial Road Improvements"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **December 29, 2021** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **January 14, 2022**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Commonwealth Ports Authority Conference Room, Saipan.** The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 20, 2022** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
**ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES**

Nation

US officials recommend shorter COVID isolation, quarantine

NEW YORK (AP)—U.S. health officials on Monday cut isolation restrictions for asymptomatic Americans who catch the coronavirus from 10 to five days, and similarly shortened the time that close contacts need to quarantine.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials said the guidance is in keeping with growing evidence that people with the coronavirus are most infectious in the two days before and three days after symptoms develop.

The decision also was driven by a recent surge in COVID-19 cases, propelled by the omicron variant.

Early research suggests omicron may cause milder illnesses than earlier versions of the coronavirus. But the sheer

number of people becoming infected—and therefore having to isolate or quarantine—threatens to crush the ability of hospitals, airlines and other businesses to stay open, experts say.

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said the country is about to see a lot of omicron cases.

“Not all of those cases are going to be severe. In fact many are going to be asymptomatic,” she told The Associated Press on Monday. “We want to make sure there is a mechanism by which we can safely continue to keep society functioning while following the science.”

Last week, the agency loosened rules that previously called on health care workers to stay out of work for 10 days if they test positive. The new

recommendations said workers could go back to work after seven days if they test negative and don’t have symptoms. And the agency said isolation time could be cut to five days, or even fewer, if there are severe staffing shortages.

Now, the CDC is changing the isolation and quarantine guidance for the general public to be even less stringent.

The change is aimed at people who are not experiencing symptoms. People with symptoms during isolation, or who develop symptoms during quarantine, are encouraged to stay home.

The CDC’s isolation and quarantine guidance has confused the public, and the new recommendations are “happening at a time when more

people are testing positive for the first time and looking for guidance,” said Lindsay Wiley, an American University public health law expert.

Nevertheless, the guidance continues to be complex.

ISOLATION

The isolation rules are for people who are infected. They are the same for people who are unvaccinated, partly vaccinated, fully vaccinated or boosted.

They say:

■ The clock starts the day you test positive.

■ An infected person should go into isolation for five days, instead of the previously recommended 10.

■ At the end of five days, if you have no symptoms,

you can return to normal activities but must wear a mask everywhere—even at home around others—for at least five more days.

■ If you still have symptoms after isolating for five days, stay home until you feel better and then start your five days of wearing a mask at all times.

QUARANTINE

The quarantine rules are for people who were in close contact with an infected person but not infected themselves.

For quarantine, the clock starts the day someone is alerted they may have been exposed to the virus.

Previously, the CDC said people who were not fully vaccinated and who came in close contact with an infected

person should stay home for at least 10 days.

Now the agency is saying only people who got booster shots can skip quarantine if they wear masks in all settings for at least 10 days.

That’s a change. Previously, people who were fully vaccinated—which the CDC has defined as having two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine—could be exempt from quarantine.

Now, people who got their initial shots but not boosters are in the same situation as those who are partly vaccinated or are not vaccinated at all: They can stop quarantine after five days if they wear masks in all settings for five days afterward.

Snow blasts California and freezes Pacific Northwest



In this photo taken from a drone, snow covers streets, sidewalks and homes where nearly a foot of snow fell over the weekend, Monday, Dec. 27, 2021, in a neighborhood in Bellingham, Wash.

SEATTLE (AP)—Severe weather sweeping parts of the U.S. brought frigid temperatures to the Pacific Northwest, heavy snow to mountains in Northern California and Nevada and unseasonable warmth to Texas and the Southeast.

Emergency warming shelters were opened throughout Oregon and western Washington as temperatures plunged into the teens and forecasters said an arctic blast would last for several days. Sunday’s snow showers blew into the Pacific Northwest from the Gulf of Alaska, dumping up to 6 inches (15 centimeters) across the Seattle area.

The National Weather Service said Seattle’s low Sunday was 20 degrees F (-6.7 C), breaking

a mark set in 1948. Bellingham was 9 degrees F (-12. 8C), three degrees colder than the previous record set in 1971.

State officials in Oregon have declared an emergency. In Multnomah County – home to Portland—about a half dozen weather shelters were open. Seattle city leaders also opened at least six severe weather shelters starting Saturday through at least Wednesday.

In West Seattle, Keith Hughes of the American Legion Hall Post 160, said his warming center can welcome about a dozen people—its capacity limited by lack of volunteer staff.

“Volunteers, this is a problem for myself as well as everyone else in town, it’s really

hard to get with COVID going on,” he said.

Winter weather led to canceled flights in Seattle, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, blowing snow in mountains of Northern California and Nevada closed key highways, with forecasters warning that travel in the Sierra Nevada could be difficult for several days.

At Donner Pass in the Sierra, officials with the University of California, Berkeley’s Central Sierra Snow Laboratory on Monday said recent snowfall has smashed the snowiest December record of 179 inches (4.6 meters), set in 1970. The record is now 193.7 inches (4.9 meters) as more

snow is expected.

The Northstar California Resort in Truckee closed its mountain operations on Monday amid blizzard conditions. The ski resort has received more than 6 feet (1.8 meters) of snow over the last 48 hours, according to the resort’s Facebook post.

Search and rescue crews are looking for a missing skier who was last seen Saturday morning on a lift at the ski resort, KCRA reported.

The snowpack in the Sierra was at dangerously low levels after recent weeks of dry weather but the state Department of Water Resources reported on Monday that the snowpack was between 145% and 161% of normal across the range with more snow expected.

ACROSS THE NATION

Police: Shooter kills 4, injures officer in Denver area

DENVER (AP)—A shooter killed four people and injured an officer in the Denver area, police said Monday. The suspect also died Monday after a series of shootings, Lakewood police said. Officers had exchanged gunfire with the suspect, KDVR reported. The officer was in stable condition when taken to a hospital with a gunshot wound. “This one individual was responsible for this very violent crime spree that took place this evening,” Denver Police Department Chief Paul Pazen said.

2 children killed, 4 injured in South Florida hit-and-run

WILTON MANORS, Fla. (AP)—Two children were killed and another four children were hospitalized with injuries when a car plowed into them and fled the scene in South Florida on Monday, authorities said. The Broward County Sheriff’s Office said in a news release that it was investigating what happened outside an apartment building in Wilton Manors, Florida, along with the Wilton Manors Police and Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue. The sheriff’s office didn’t immediately provide ages for any of the children. Steven Gollan, a battalion chief with the Fort Lauderdale Fire Department, said at a news conference Monday night that the hospitalized children were “severely injured.”

3 teens dead, 1 critical in shooting at Texas gas station

GARLAND, Texas (AP)—

Three teenagers were killed and a fourth was critically wounded when another teen shot them at a gas station in the Dallas area over the holiday weekend, police said Monday. The shooting happened Sunday night in the Dallas suburb of Garland and was captured on surveillance video, the Garland Police Department said. Investigators are still trying to determine a motive. Garland Police Chief Jeff Bryan said a 14-year-old boy who investigators believe is the shooter was arrested Monday afternoon. In surveillance video police showed during a news conference, a shirtless boy or man could be seen crouching while walking toward the store and carrying a handgun. He swings open the door and starts shooting into the store from the doorway.

Kentucky’s death toll from tornadoes rises to 77

FRANKFORT, Ky (AP)—Kentucky’s death toll from devastating tornadoes earlier this month rose by one as Gov. Andy Beshear announced Monday that an infant died last week. The state’s revised death toll from the storms is now 77. The infant, from Graves County in the western part of the state, died last week, the governor said. Mayfield, the county seat, was hit especially hard by the storms, with hundreds of buildings destroyed. “This is one that rips at the very fabric of who we are,” Beshear said during a news briefing. He was joined by Kentucky first lady Brittainy Beshear.

World

Syria reports 2nd Israeli attack on vital port in a month

Omicron spreads global gloom over New Year celebrations

BRUSSELS (AP)—As omicron spreads ever more gloom around the globe ahead of New Year's Eve, governments are moving at different speeds to contain the scourge, with some reimposing restrictions immediately and others hesitating to spoil the party again.

In Britain, where the highly contagious variant of the coronavirus has sent caseloads soaring to record highs, Health Secretary Sajid Javid said Monday no further restrictions will be introduced in England before the new year. New daily infections in England are hovering around 100,000, and hospital admissions were up more than 70% on Christmas from a week earlier.

"When we get into the new year, of course, we will see then if we do need to take any further measures, but nothing more until then, at least," Javid said.

Elsewhere in the United Kingdom, though, nightclubs have been ordered closed and limits on gatherings imposed

in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, leaving the country divided in its approach to the crisis.

The Netherlands, meanwhile, has already shut down all nonessential stores, restaurants and bars and extended the school holidays in what largely amounts to a new lockdown. In Belgium, new measures went into effect Monday and over the weekend: Shopping in large groups was banned, and movie theaters and concert halls closed in the middle of the holiday season.

In France, Prime Minister Jean Castex announced a set of restrictions set to kick in next week, after New Year's. Among them: Big events will be limited to 2,000 people indoors and 5,000 outdoors; eating and drinking will be banned in theaters, at sports venues and on public transportation; and working from home will be mandatory at least three days a week for employees whose jobs make it possible.

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP)—Israeli missiles fired from the Mediterranean struck the Syrian port of Latakia early Tuesday, igniting a fire in the container terminal, Syrian state media reported, in the second such attack on the vital facility this month.

It is also a rare targeting of the port handling most imports for Syria, which has been ravaged by a decade-old civil war and western-imposed sanctions.

The state news agency SANA quoted a military official as saying that Israeli missiles fired from the west of Latakia hit the port's container terminal, igniting fires that caused major damage. The unidentified official said firefighters were battling the flames for nearly an hour after the attack.

Syria's state-run Al-Ikhbariyah TV ran footage showing flames and smoke rising from the terminal. It reported damage to residential buildings, a

hospital, shops and some tourist sites near the port.

There were no immediate reports of casualties from the missile attacks, which activated Syrian air defenses, according to SANA.

A similar attack was reported on Dec. 7, when Israeli warplanes targeted the container terminal, causing fires and explosions.

An Al-Ikhbariyah TV reporter in the area said Tuesday's attack appeared to have

been larger and the explosions could be heard in Tartus, another coastal city more than 80 kilometers (nearly 50 miles) away. The reporter said ambulances were rushed to the scene but it remained unclear if there were any casualties.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitoring group, said at the time that the Dec. 7 airstrike hit arms shipments for Iran-backed fighters.

WORLD BRIEFS

NATO says its jets scrambled 290 times due to Russian planes

BRUSSELS (AP)—NATO fighter jets were scrambled hundreds of times this year to intercept aircraft, most of them Russian warplanes in northwest Europe that were flying too close to the airspace of its member countries, the military organization said Tuesday. NATO said that 290 of around 370 total missions were flown in 2021 in response to the activities of Russian aircraft. Most of those took place in the Baltic region around Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, where the organization has an air-policing operation. "Generally, intercepts occurred without incident as NATO planes take off to identify the approaching aircraft and escort it out of the area. Very few intercepted flights entered allied airspace," a statement from the 30-country U.S.-led alliance said.

France imposes new virus measures amid spike in infections

PARIS (AP)—The French government announced new COVID-19 measures on Monday in an effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus, yet stopped short of imposing drastic restrictions before New Year's Eve. Starting from next week, big events will be lim-

ited to 2,000 people indoors and 5,000 people outdoors. People will be requested to sit down during concerts and customers won't be allowed to stand up in bars, French Prime Minister Jean Castex said. Eating and drinking will be banned in cinemas, theaters, sport facilities and public transportation, including on long-distance routes. Working from home will be mandatory at least three days per week for employees whose job makes it possible, he added. The new rules will be in place for at least three weeks, he said.

Nicaragua seizes former Taiwan embassy to give it to China

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP)—The Nicaraguan government has seized the former embassy and diplomatic offices of Taiwan, saying they belong to China. President Daniel Ortega's government broke off relations with Taiwan this month, saying it would recognize only the mainland government. Before departing, Taiwanese diplomats attempted to donate the properties to the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Managua. But Ortega's government said late Sunday that any such donation would be invalid and that the building in an upscale Managua neighborhood belongs to China.

IN CELEBRATION OF HIS NEW LIFE

Edward Reyes Flores Jr.

Sunrise: September 18, 1964 Sunset: December 22, 2021

In his new life he now joins his:

Grandparents: †Joaquin Aguon Flores, †Yerma Bruggeman, †Antonia Camacho Borja
†Vicente Cruz Reyes, & †Maria Guzman San Nicolas

Parents: †Eduardo Bruggemann Flores & †Maximina San Nicolas Reyes Flores

Parents In-law: †Jesus Barcinas Agulto & †Dolores Masga Agulto

Sister: †Lydia Flores Santos

Sister-in-law: †Katherine Agulto Deleon Guerrero

His memories will forever live in the hearts of:

Wife: Mary Ann Agulto Flores

Children: Audrea A. Flores (Edward, Deidre Ann, Sean Dylon, Argeanna)
Argernon A. Flores & Bonny Mendiola (Madilynn, Noninsha, Ha'ani, Adler)
April A. Flores & Frankie Romolor (Frankie Jr., Jamaika, Nicolai, Ezekiel, Hezekiah)
Austin A. Flores & Jovahna S. Taitingfong

Siblings: Arturo Santos & family
Edwin R./Ellen B. Flores & family
Rebecca F./Henry Pangelinan & family
Fermin R./Sophie Delacruz Flores & family
Alfred R. Flores/Elisha Wenio & family
Janet Flores/Juan Torres & family
Anthony R./Ramona S. Flores & family

Reared Brother: James P./Maryanne P. Reyes & family

Brothers/
Sister-In-Laws: Joseph M./Frances Agulto & family
Clarissa M./Vincent Torres & family
Eleanor A./Jesse R. Aguon & family
Zeno C./Tina Deleon Guerrero & family
Aileen M. Agulto/John Kaipat & family
Gerald M./Evelyn Agulto & family
Sherlina M. Agulto/Jesse H. Tenorio & family
Ernestina M. Agulto & child

He will be missed by his numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

On Thursday, December 30, 2021 at 8:30 am our beloved Edward will be escorted from the Borja Funeral Home to San Vicente Parish. Viewing will follow upon arrival. At 11:00 am, mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated followed by interment services at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery where he will be laid to rest.

Your prayers and thoughts are greatly appreciated.

Thank you

MARY ANN AGULTO FLORES, CHILDREN & FAMILY

Good Housekeeping



Boxes and bins allow for greater organization in this closet.

(PROVIDED PHOTO/TNS)

CLOSET ENVY

By CATHY HOBBS
Tribune News Service

When it comes to closets, organization is often top of mind. But where do you start? There is the mindset that everything should have a place. Have tiny items that you fear may get lost? Place them in decorative boxes as opposed to loosely on shelves. Have items that won't work well on hangers? Create slots to allow them to be neatly folded. Here are some top tips to create a functional and inviting closet.

DO'S

- Do use boxes and bins to hold small items.
- Do use color-coded bins to hold similar colors and patterns together.
- Do incorporate slim or huggable hangers to create more space.
- Do color-code your closet by pairing similar colors and patterns together.

DON'TS

- Don't keep items in your closet you haven't worn in at least a year. Purge those items no longer needed or worn.
- Don't mix different seasons of clothing in the same closet if possible. If you have the storage space, try to store items in your closet by season.
- Don't design your closet before taking inventory of what you have and a plan of how you want your closet to function. Otherwise, you may end up creating a closet that isn't fully maximized for usage.

NOW HERE'S A TIP

By JOANN DERSON
(C) 2021 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

- Save the peel on oranges and grapefruits. You can toss them on a fire for a nice smell.
- Fold and snip a coffee filter into a paper snowflake. Lay over an iced cookie or cake to sift a sugar design on top.
- "When planning to visit my hometown for the holidays, I set aside a few hours to take the kids to the park or a nice playground. I message all my old friends and classmates with kids (Facebook is great for this) a few weeks ahead of time and let them know when I'll be there. It's great to catch up while the kids play, and even if no one shows up, we still have a fun break."—F.L. in California
- "When there are big family jobs to be done (like getting ready for the holidays), we write all the

tasks down on slips of paper and put them in a hat. We take turns choosing tasks until all the paper is divided out. Sometimes we trade, but we all get a fair chore list."—V.O. in Oregon

■ Make a holiday cheese ball simply: Combine a package of cream cheese with a cup of finely shredded cheese (your choice) and 1/3 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt. Form into a ball, roll in coating of your choice (dried fruit pieces, chopped nuts, spices, etc.) and chill. Wrap in a pretty cellophane bag and bring with pita chips, crackers or pretzels as a hostess gift.

■ "Wax drippings from candles can be scraped off of most hard surfaces with the side of a credit card."—T.E. in Kansas

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

Life & Style

For celebrations, English fizz is on the rise



The birthplace of acclaimed poet Edna St. Vincent Millay is seen, Dec. 14, 2021, in Rockland, Maine. AP

Poem structure: Edna St. Vincent Millay home gets face-lift

ROCKLAND, Maine (AP)—The restoration of the Maine home that was the birthplace of Edna St. Vincent Millay, the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, will be completed in the new year.

Millay was born in an upstairs bedroom of the house in 1892 and remained there for the first six months of her life. She lived in several other homes in the area, but none have been preserved in her honor.

“Edna really belongs to Rockland and Union and Camden. Her early poetry is about the coast, about Maine. It’s very carefree and appealing poetry,” said Ann Morris, president of the Millay House Rockland Board of

Directors. “This is the home that is being preserved in order to preserve her legacy.”

The restoration began five years ago. The duplex will have a year-round rental on one side and a writer-in-residence on the other side, the Bangor Daily News reported.

The building was slated for foreclosure when the Rockland Historical Society purchased it in 2016. Ownership of the home was transferred to Millay House Rockland when the non-profit organization formed in 2017.

Funds have largely been raised through grants, Morris said, including multiple contributions from the Quimby Family Foundation.

The poet, who won her Pulitzer Prize in 1923, moved

from Maine to New York City. Her husband managed her readings that were held across the country. She died in 1950.

Millay House Rockland hopes to begin renting the north side unit, where Millay was born, early in the new year. Remaining work will be completed by the end of 2022, and Millay House Rockland will be partnering with the Rockland-based Ellis Beauregard Foundation to use the south side unit for a writer-in-residence program.

The home home was placed on the National Register of Historic Places but not because of its famous resident. It’s because he home exemplifies duplexes built during the 19th century for the working class.

LONDON (AP)—English sparkling wine has been gaining prestige in recent years, with some experts comparing it to Champagne in taste and quality.

Globally, the sector is still relatively small: IWSR Drinks Market Analysis reports that sparkling wine produced in the U.K. represents about 0.2% of total global sparkling wine volume. But sales are growing: U.K.-produced sparkling wine volume rose by almost 11% from 2015-2020, the report said.

“Maybe 10 years ago, there were only two or three wines which might have been known outside of the U.K. or certainly recognized by wine critics as well,” says Jonathan White, spokesman for British wine producer Gusbourne. Today, “there’s a collective of maybe

10 to 20 producers that are making really excellent wines.”

Gusbourne planted their first vines in Appledore, Kent, in 2004. They released their debut Brut and Blanc de Blanc sparkling wines in 2010, and say demand has been growing ever since.

“There’s been a splurge of interest from overseas in recent years as wine media and critics have started to talk more fondly and more positively about the wines from England,” White says.

Known as the “Garden of England,” Kent has long been home to fruit-growing in the U.K., so it’s natural the area has become one of the country’s most successful wine-growing regions.

The pandemic gave local

producers a boost in 2020 because travelers who couldn’t visit wineries abroad “started to realize that they could actually visit a winery at home,” says Anne McHale, a certified master of wine in London.

Talking from The Bloomsbury Hotel, where she has curated one of the largest English sparkling wine menus in the U.K., McHale says English sparkling made its name in 1998 when Nyetimber won best sparkling wine in the world at the International Wine and Spirits Competition.

“It was judged blind against a whole load of Champagnes and other sparkling wines by top industry judges, so people began to become aware that in this country we can actually make good quality wine,” she says.

‘Dallas Buyers Club’ director Jean-Marc Vallée dead at 58

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Director and producer Jean-Marc Vallée, who won an Emmy for directing the hit HBO series “Big Little Lies” and whose 2013 drama “Dallas Buyers Club” earned multiple Oscar nominations, has died. He was 58.

Vallée died suddenly in his cabin outside Quebec City, Canada, over the weekend, his representative Bumble Ward said Sunday.

Vallée was acclaimed for his naturalistic approach to filmmaking, directing stars including Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman, Amy Adams and Jake Gyllenhaal over the past decade.

He directed Emily Blunt in 2009’s “The Young Victoria” and became a sought-after name in Hollywood after “Dallas Buyers Club,” featuring Mat-

thew McConaughey and Jared Leto, earned six Academy Awards nominations, including best picture.

“With a gentle hand and heart Jean-Marc was a true receiver—

he didn’t romanticize life so much as he saw life romantic—from the struggle to the pain to the wink and the whisper, love stories were everywhere in his eye,” tweeted McConaughey, one of several stars paying tribute to Vallée on Monday.

Vallée often shot with natural light and hand-held cameras, giving actors freedom to improvise from the script and move around within a scene’s location. The crew roamed up and down the Pacific Coast Trail to shoot Witherspoon in 2014’s “Wild.”

“They can move anywhere



Vallée

they want,” the Canadian filmmaker said of his actors in a 2014 interview with The Associated Press. “It’s giving the importance to storytelling, emotion, characters. I try not to interfere too much. I don’t need to cut performances. Often, the cinematographer and I were like, ‘This location sucks. It’s not very nice. But, hey, that’s life.’”

He re-teamed with Witherspoon to direct the first season of “Big Little Lies” in 2017, and directed Adams in 2018’s “Sharp Objects,” also for HBO. Vallée won DGA awards for both.

“I will always remember you as the sun goes down,” Witherspoon wrote on Instagram along with a series of photos of the director.

Absent husband to one woman is absent boyfriend to another

DEAR ABBY: I have been with my boyfriend for eight years. When I met him he was married, but his wife lived in another state. Although he said he loved her, he would visit her only for a week every other month or so. While he was there, instead of concentrating on her he spent most of his time visiting his friends.

He never intended to leave her for me, but she found out about us a year ago and told him she wanted a divorce. It became final a few months ago. He tells me he loves me every day, but he still spends a lot of time with his friends. We used to be together two or three days a week; we are down to one night most weeks, and occasionally two nights.

I don’t think he looks forward to our time together the way I do. I’m afraid if I have a heart-to-heart conversation with him about this, he will walk away from our relationship. I am terrified of being alone, so I settle for waiting for my turn.

During the COVID quarantine, we kept to social distancing for several weeks, until I felt we had been isolated long enough that we could be together again. Tonight, he joined some friends for a social gathering, knowing it would compromise what I had worked so hard for so we could be together. Abby, it feels like he cares less for me than for his friends. Am I fighting a losing battle to stay with someone

who seems so cavalier about our relationship?

LEFT OUT IN WASHINGTON

DEAR LEFT OUT: Do you not recognize that you have created the very situation you fear the most? You ARE alone! This man isn’t going to give you anything more than you are already getting from him, which is very little. This isn’t a losing battle you are fighting; the battle is over. He has made clear where his priorities lie, and they don’t include you. If you really want a companion, find someone who is willing to share his life with you to the extent that you are willing to share yours with him. This man isn’t the one.

DEAR ABBY: For the past week, my son-in-law has been texting me daily. I don’t mind his texting about normal things, but he’s either seeking a very close friendship or he is attracted to me. He and my daughter are 22 and very religious. I don’t think asking me via text how he looks shirtless now compared to a year ago (he has texted me twice with no shirt on) is appropriate.

There have been other red flags on his side of the conversation, and I have never misled him in any way. Should I confront him via text? Should I tell my daughter? I love her and do not want her to be mad at me. I did nothing wrong.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



ONLY HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW

DEAR M.I.L.: I believe you. If your son-in-law’s texts are suggestive or make you uncomfortable, speak up and tell HIM—not your daughter. If he persists in that vein, discuss it with her then. As to his request for a comment on his physique, ask him why he’s asking his mother-in-law and not his wife. And follow it up by telling him frankly that you think the question and the photos are inappropriate.

To order “How to Write Letters for All Occasions,” send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Waddle shines, Dolphins beat Saints 20-3 to win 7th straight



NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Rookie sensation Jaylen Waddle returned from the COVID-19 list to catch 10 passes for 92 yards and touchdown, and the Miami Dolphins beat the short-handed New Orleans Saints 20-3 on Monday night, becoming the first NFL team to win seven straight games after losing seven in a row.

Nik Needham intercepted Saints rookie quarterback Ian Book and returned it 28 yards for a touchdown to help to help Miami become one of four 8-7 teams — along with Baltimore, the Los Angeles Chargers and Las Vegas — in contention for one of the final playoff spots in the AFC.

Book started for the Saints (7-8) because of a COVID-19 outbreak that took 16 players off the active roster, including starting QB Tayson Hill and veteran backup Trevor Siemian.

With the Saints' offensive line missing three starters, including both tackles, Book completed 12 of 20 passes for 135 yards, was sacked eight times and was intercepted twice.

The Saints' defense helped keep the game within reach until Waddle scored on a 1-yard shovel pass from Tua Tagovailoa to make it 17-3 with



Miami Dolphins' Jaylen Waddle (17) runs for a touchdown during the second half of an NFL football game against the New Orleans Saints Monday, Dec. 27, 2021, in New Orleans. AP

5:10 left in the third quarter.

Tagovailoa, who entered the game with an NFL best 69.9% completion rate, connected on 19 of 26 passes (73.1%) for 198 yards and the short TD. He also was intercepted by Marshon Lattimore.

THE WADDLE EFFECT

Waddle returned to the lineup after missing Miami's previous game because of a positive COVID-19 test. He has 96 catches this season, eclipsing New Orleans' Michael Thomas for the second-most

receptions by a rookie, and leaving him five short of Anquan Boldin's rookie record of 101 catches in 2003.

BOOK'S OPENING

Book got a roar of encouragement from the crowd when

he first took the field and Saints fans were cheering again two plays later when he completed his first career pass. Then they let out a collective gasp on his second pass—Needham's pick-6.

Book's next two series also

lasted three plays each and ended on sacks. New Orleans didn't get a first down until the second quarter, and that drive lasted five plays.

The Saints finally moved the ball on their fifth series, needing just four plays to pick up three first downs. A roughing-the-passer penalty on a 12-yard completion to Alvin Kamara moved New Orleans to the Miami 23, setting up Brett Maher's field goal to make it 10-3.

Cam Jordan's second sack of the game in the final minute of the second quarter forced Miami to try a 59-yard field goal, which Jason Sanders missed, keeping the Saints' deficit at one touchdown at halftime.

INJURIES/COVID-19

Dolphins: Miami went into the game missing seven players because of COVID-19.

Saints: In addition to having 16 players removed from the active roster by positive COVID-19 tests, New Orleans scratched starting left tackle Terron Armstead, who was not yet ready to return from a knee injury that also kept him out the previous week. Reserve right tackle Caleb Benenoch was treated on the field for an injury in the fourth quarter. Receiver Tre'Quan Smith left the game with a chest injury.

Rams not flawless, but looking sharp after perfect December

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Los Angeles Rams followed up a winless November with a perfect December, and the way they overcame major obstacles to reach that mark brought all kinds of holiday cheer to a team that refuses to fall out of the Super Bowl chase.

The Rams' 30-23 win at Minnesota on Sunday secured their fourth playoff berth in five seasons under coach Sean McVay and put them in sole possession of first place in the NFC West.

Los Angeles (11-4) controls its destiny for a home playoff game as it heads into its final two games—at Baltimore on Sunday, and at home against nemesis San Francisco in the regular-season finale.

A month of COVID-19 woes didn't slow the Rams, and a short week of rest and preparation for the Vikings didn't appear to faze them. They didn't panic when they fell into a losing skid last month, and they aren't getting overly excited with their recent successes.

"It's just about being better," Rams defensive lineman A'Shawn Robinson said Monday. "I don't really care about records. Records don't really show what the body of work is."

The Rams followed up a home win over Seattle last Tuesday with a road victory over the Vikings just five days later. Both games weren't perfect, but Los Angeles' stars came through both times—none more so than defensive lineman Aaron Donald and receiver Cooper Kupp, who celebrated their Pro Bowl selections with two more outstanding performances in Minnesota.

The Rams even won a road game in which their quarterback threw three interceptions for the first time in 17 years. Matthew Stafford's mistakes in the second half of the season are cause for concern, but they haven't been able to interrupt an impressive stretch for a team with confidence growing by the week.

"There's been great energy," running back Sony Michel said. "Everybody is feeding off the same energy, riding the same wave, feeling that same frequency."

WHAT'S WORKING

The Rams' run defense is sturdy and getting stronger. After holding Minnesota to 66 net yards on the ground, Los Angeles has allowed more than 103 yards rushing just once in eight games since



Minnesota Vikings running back Alexander Mattison (25) runs from Los Angeles Rams defensive end Aaron Donald (99) during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 26, 2021, in Minneapolis. AP

October. After a poor start to the season, the Rams are up to sixth in the NFL with 96.9 yards per game allowed on the ground.

WHAT NEEDS HELP

There's still no reason to think the Rams' secondary can't be carved up by the NFC's elite quarterbacks in the playoffs despite Jalen Ramsey's brilliant season and some of the NFL's best pass rushers up front. Kirk Cousins was the fifth 300-yard passer this season against a defense that allowed just one quarterback to

reach the mark in 2020. Starting cornerback Darious Williams wasn't sharp, and the patchwork supporting cast remained largely unimpressive.

STOCK UP

Los Angeles hit a midseason jackpot in kick returner Brandon Powell, whose 61-yard punt return for a TD catalyzed the win. The Rams lost their first three projected kick returners to injuries, so Powell's arrival was borne of desperation—but the former Florida wideout is providing steady contributions at a

position that appeared to be a weakness.

STOCK DOWN

Stafford is making plays, but he's also making mistakes. He threw three interceptions Sunday for the first time since the 2018 season opener, and the Vikings dropped two other balls that could have been picked. Stafford also misfired on a handful of big throws that should have been completions for a quarterback of his talents and experience. Stafford's worst performance of the season kept Minnesota in a game the Rams could have won in a blowout.

INJURIES

Linebacker Ernest Jones needs surgery on his high ankle sprain after an offensive lineman rolled up on him. The rookie has taken on an important role since his midseason addition to the starting lineup.

"Ernest was just starting to hit his stride," McVay said.

There's a chance Jones could return for the playoffs, but he is headed to injured reserve along with RB Darrell Henderson, who sprained a ligament in his right knee when he was tackled awkwardly. Henderson will be sidelined for at least three to five weeks, according to McVay, but his absence is miti-

gated by Michel's outstanding play and the imminent return of RB Cam Akers, who has a chance to play this week for the first time. He tore his Achilles tendon before training camp. ... C Brian Allen went down with a knee injury, but McVay thinks he's fine. ... OT Joseph Noteboom is back off the reserve/COVID-19 list. He barely missed the deadline to play Sunday.

KEY NUMBER

9 — Career offensive snaps for undrafted rookie left tackle Alaric Jackson before he was forced into action by an injury on the line. The Iowa product acquitted himself quite well in those difficult circumstances, performing strongly in the run game and allowing just two quarterback pressures. The Rams have been high on Jackson since they signed him, and he showed why.

NEXT STEPS

Another long flight on a holiday for another early kickoff—although the Rams are 4-0 in games starting at 10 a.m. Pacific time this season. If Los Angeles beats Baltimore and Arizona loses later in the day, the Rams would clinch their third NFC West title under McVay and a home playoff game. If not, the race will go down to the final weekend.

Harden scores 39, Nets beat Clippers 124-108 for LA sweep



LOS ANGELES (AP)—So much for feeling his way back after being out two weeks in the NBA's health and safety protocols. James Harden sure looks all the way back.

Harden tied his season high with 39 points and had a season-best 15 assists in the second game of his return, and the Brooklyn Nets beat the Los Angeles Clippers 124-108 on Monday night in a matchup of short-handed teams.

He had eight rebounds, just missing a second straight triple-double.

"I wasn't expecting it," Nets coach Steve Nash said. "Against the Lakers and tonight, he was just clinical. If he plays like that, we'll be very difficult to beat."

Harden had 36 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists in a 122-115 win against LeBron James and the Lakers on Christmas in the Nets' first game after three straight postponements due to the coronavirus pandemic.

He used his down time to lift weights and do cardio at home.

"That protocol could have went two ways and I just overly locked into my body and my eating," Harden said. "When you prepare yourself to be great, there's no surprise."

The Nets improved their NBA-best road mark to 13-3 with a sweep in Los Angeles.

"Confidence is through the roof," Harden said.

A combined 15 players were missing from both teams due to health and safety protocols as well as injuries. The Nets have seven players in protocols, including NBA scoring leader Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving, both of whom weren't with the team.

Turns out, Harden was plenty on his own and his supporting cast backed him up. Four other Nets scored in double figures, including Patty Mills, who had 18 points and made six 3-pointers. Nic Claxton tied his career high with 18 points.

"Our confidence level for our bench is high," Harden said. "They can come in and impact the game. We can find different ways to win."

With Harden leading drives inside, the Nets completely dominated the Clippers in the paint with a 74-38 edge.

"He picked us apart, everything we did," Clippers coach Tyronn Lue said.

The Clippers were without their two superstars. Paul George is expected to be out up to a month with a torn ligament in his right elbow and Kawhi Leonard has yet to play this season as he works his way back from ACL reconstruction surgery.

Marcus Morris led the Clip-



Brooklyn Nets' James Harden reacts after making a basket during second half of the team's NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Clippers on Monday, Dec. 27, 2021, in Los Angeles. AP

pers with a season high-tying 24 points in his first game in nearly two weeks after being in the protocols. Eric Bledsoe added 15 points.

Bulls 130, Hawks 118

In Atlanta, DeMar DeRozan scored 35 points, Zach LaVine added 30 and the Chicago Bulls won their fourth straight game, beating the short-handed Atlanta Hawks 130-118 on Monday night.

Cam Reddish finished with 33 points and Trae Young, cleared from health and safety protocols about 90 minutes before tipoff, returned to the starting lineup

and scored 29 for Atlanta in the first game of a home-and-home set with the Bulls.

DeRozan was 14 for 20 from the field. LaVine, in his second game back after missing 15 days in protocols, went 11 for 21, including 5 of 8 from 3-point range. Nikola Vucevic got his 14th double-double with 24 points and 17 rebounds.

The Bulls improved to 21-10, second-best in the Eastern Conference. They began the day 10 games over .500 for the first time since January 2016.

Grizzlies 114, Suns 113

In Phoenix, Ja Morant scored

33 points, including a layup with 0.5 seconds to play that gave Memphis a victory over Phoenix.

Morant's basket came after Devin Booker's 3-pointer with 5 seconds to play gave the Suns their first lead since early in the game. After a timeout, Morant drove the left side of the lane and banked it in. Phoenix's final shot from the corner was off the mark.

Desmond Bane scored 32 points, 19 in the first half when Memphis built a 60-48 lead. Steven Adams had 13 points and 16 rebounds as the Grizzlies dominated the boards, 50-35.

Booker led the Suns with 30 points. Deandre Ayton and Jae Crowder, as well as coach Monty Williams, were placed in the COVID-19 protocols. The Suns lost their second straight at home following the Christmas defeat to Golden State.

Jazz 110, Spurs 104

In San Antonio, Jordan Clarkson scored 23 points, Rudy Gobert had 16 points and 13 rebounds, and Utah beat San Antonio for its fourth straight victory.

Bojan Bogdanovic had 19 points and Joe Ingles added 17 for Utah, which has won 12 of 14.

Derrick White scored 21 points and Doug McDermott added 17 for San Antonio, who had its season-high, three-game winning streak snapped.

Mavericks 132, Trail Blazers 117

In Portland, Ore., Kristaps Porzingis had a season-high 34 points and nine rebounds, leading Dallas past Portland.

Both teams were short-handed. The Mavericks were missing six players, including star Luka Doncic, in the NBA's health and safety protocols. Portland had seven players in the protocols, as well as head coach Chauncey Billups.

Dwight Powell scored a season-high 22 points for Dallas, and Brandon Knight came off the bench to score 18 points in his third game with Dallas after signing as a hardship exemption on Dec. 23.

Damian Lillard led the Trail Blazers with 26 points. Nassir Little had a double-double with 20 points and 10 rebounds.

Timberwolves 108, Celtics 103

In Minneapolis, Jaylen Nowell scored 29 points and Nathan Knight added 20 points and 11 rebounds, leading short-handed Minnesota over Boston.

Jaden McDaniels scored 17 points and Malik Beasley added 15 points and eight rebounds for the Wolves, who were playing without all five of their regular starters due to COVID-19 protocols.

Veteran center Greg Monroe, signed to a 10-day contract earlier in the day, had 11 points and nine rebounds in 25 minutes for the Wolves, who snapped a two-game losing streak.

Jaylen Brown led Boston with 26 points. Payton Pritchard scored 22 points and Al Horford added 16 points and nine rebounds.

Hornets 123, Rockets 99

In Charlotte, N.C., Terry Rozier scored 27 points and made seven 3-pointers, and Charlotte routed Houston for its second straight win.

Kelly Oubre chipped in with 18 points, while LaMelo Ball and Jalen McDaniels had 16. Mason Plumlee finished with a season-high 15 points and nine rebounds for the Hornets, who pulled back above .500 on the season.

Eric Gordon and Christian Wood each had 16 points for the Rockets, who've lost six of their last seven games. Houston played without starters Jae'Sean Tate and Garrison Matthews, and key backups K.J. Martin and D.J. Augustin because of the NBA's health and safety protocols.

NBA changes COVID protocols, shortens path to return to play

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

NBA players who test positive for COVID-19 now have a quicker path to return to play, after the league completed a significant update to its health and safety protocols on Monday.

The biggest change: Isolation periods for players who test positive may now be significantly shortened—down to six days from what has been the customary 10—provided those players are asymptomatic and meet other testing standards. Teams were told of the new protocols Monday in a memo sent by the league, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press.

That memo was sent on the same day the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cut isolation restrictions for Americans who catch the

coronavirus from 10 to five days. CDC officials made that move saying that evidence shows people with the coronavirus are most infectious in the two days before and three days after symptoms develop.

The NBA also relied on data, telling teams the updated protocols "reflects analysis of testing data that the league and its infectious disease experts and epidemiologists have gathered throughout the pandemic." The changes were made in agreement with the National Basketball Players Association.

The NBA has seen coronavirus numbers soar in recent days, even with 97% of players vaccinated and at least 65% of eligible players boosted against the virus. A pair of coaches—Phoenix's Monty Williams and Portland's Chauncey Billups—entered the NBA's health and

safety protocols Monday.

"In the league, everyone's kind of going through the same thing," said Suns assistant Kevin Young, who is taking over in Williams' absence. "We had a slogan going back to last year—navigating uncertainty—and here we are."

More proof of the uncertainty: The Suns had been listing Elfrid Payton as out and in the protocols throughout the day on Monday, then declared him available about 90 minutes before game time.

The Blazers said the team will be coached by assistant Scott Brooks, a longtime head coach, during Billups' absence.

Phoenix was hosting Memphis on Monday, while Portland—with seven players in the protocols as well—was hosting Dallas. The Trail Blazers had been off since Dec. 21; their game that had been

scheduled for Dec. 23 against Brooklyn was postponed because of virus issues decimating the Nets' roster. That was one of nine games postponed by the NBA so far this season.

Williams and Billups being off the sideline raises the total of head coaches in the NBA currently sidelined by virus issues to four, including the Los Angeles Lakers' Frank Vogel and Chicago's Billy Donovan. Vogel has missed the Lakers' last four games, and Donovan is missing his second consecutive game when the Bulls visit Atlanta on Monday.

"With Frank right now, it's a matter of testing and getting those negative tests in," said Lakers assistant coach David Fizdale, who is running the team in Vogel's absence. "But he's doing well health-wise. His spirit's right. Obviously, he's chomping at the bit to get back and start competing."

The count of players in the NBA's protocols remained around 120 on Monday evening. Among the new notable additions to the list: Olympic gold medalist Jayson Tatum, placed into protocols by the Boston Celtics.

Atlanta listed 12 players as out—10 for virus reasons, two for injuries—for its game against Chicago, but the Hawks said guard Trae Young was cleared to return, making that announcement about 90 minutes before tip-off.

Teams that have been hit particularly hard by virus-related issues have been able to cobble together rosters over the last couple weeks primarily by signing players to 10-day hardship deals.

Tatum was one of 15 players—eight Celtics, seven Timberwolves—ruled out of the Boston-Minnesota game for virus-related reasons alone.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|--------------|----|----|------|----|
| Brooklyn | 23 | 9 | .719 | — |
| Philadelphia | 17 | 16 | .515 | 6½ |
| Boston | 16 | 18 | .471 | 8 |
| Toronto | 14 | 16 | .467 | 8 |
| New York | 15 | 18 | .455 | 8½ |

Southeast Division

| | | | | |
|------------|----|----|------|----|
| Miami | 21 | 13 | .618 | — |
| Washington | 17 | 16 | .515 | 3½ |
| Charlotte | 18 | 17 | .514 | 3½ |
| Atlanta | 15 | 18 | .455 | 5½ |
| Orlando | 7 | 27 | .206 | 14 |

Central Division

| | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|------|-----|
| Chicago | 21 | 10 | .677 | — |
| Milwaukee | 22 | 13 | .629 | 1 |
| Cleveland | 20 | 13 | .606 | 2 |
| Indiana | 14 | 20 | .412 | 8½ |
| Detroit | 5 | 27 | .156 | 16½ |

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

| | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Memphis | 21 | 14 | .600 | — |
| Dallas | 16 | 17 | .485 | 4 |
| San Antonio | 14 | 19 | .424 | 6 |
| New Orleans | 12 | 22 | .353 | 8½ |
| Houston | 10 | 24 | .294 | 10½ |

Northwest Division

| | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Utah | 24 | 9 | .727 | — |
| Denver | 16 | 16 | .500 | 7½ |
| Minnesota | 16 | 17 | .485 | 8 |
| Portland | 13 | 20 | .394 | 11 |
| Oklahoma City | 12 | 20 | .375 | 11½ |

Pacific Division

| | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Golden State | 27 | 6 | .818 | — |
| Phoenix | 26 | 7 | .788 | 1 |
| L.A. Clippers | 17 | 17 | .500 | 10½ |
| L.A. Lakers | 16 | 18 | .471 | 11½ |
| Sacramento | 13 | 21 | .382 | 14½ |

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
|-------------|---|----|---|------|-----|-----|
| Buffalo | 9 | 6 | 0 | .600 | 427 | 264 |
| New England | 9 | 6 | 0 | .600 | 388 | 260 |
| Miami | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 305 | 315 |
| e-N.Y. Jets | 4 | 11 | 0 | .267 | 276 | 449 |

South

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|----|---|------|-----|-----|
| Tennessee | 10 | 5 | 0 | .667 | 357 | 326 |
| Indianapolis | 9 | 6 | 0 | .600 | 420 | 316 |
| e-Houston | 4 | 11 | 0 | .267 | 248 | 401 |
| e-Jacksonville | 2 | 13 | 0 | .133 | 217 | 396 |

North

| | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|------|-----|-----|
| Cincinnati | 9 | 6 | 0 | .600 | 410 | 324 |
| Baltimore | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 355 | 356 |
| Pittsburgh | 7 | 7 | 1 | .500 | 301 | 371 |
| Cleveland | 7 | 8 | 0 | .467 | 314 | 329 |

West

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|---|---|------|-----|-----|
| y-Kansas City | 11 | 4 | 0 | .733 | 421 | 306 |
| L.A. Chargers | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 408 | 411 |
| Las Vegas | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 316 | 387 |
| Denver | 7 | 8 | 0 | .467 | 298 | 260 |

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|---|------|-----|-----|
| y-Dallas | 11 | 4 | 0 | .733 | 457 | 307 |
| Philadelphia | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 398 | 318 |
| Washington | 6 | 9 | 0 | .400 | 297 | 407 |
| e-N.Y. Giants | 4 | 11 | 0 | .267 | 248 | 365 |

South

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|---|------|-----|-----|
| y-Tampa Bay | 11 | 4 | 0 | .733 | 442 | 312 |
| Atlanta | 7 | 8 | 0 | .467 | 278 | 400 |
| New Orleans | 7 | 8 | 0 | .467 | 316 | 305 |
| e-Carolina | 5 | 10 | 0 | .333 | 277 | 345 |

North

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|---|------|-----|-----|
| y-Green Bay | 12 | 3 | 0 | .800 | 383 | 324 |
| Minnesota | 7 | 8 | 0 | .467 | 384 | 372 |
| e-Chicago | 5 | 10 | 0 | .333 | 265 | 373 |
| e-Detroit | 2 | 12 | 1 | .167 | 259 | 386 |

West

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|---|------|-----|-----|
| x-L.A. Rams | 11 | 4 | 0 | .733 | 416 | 326 |
| x-Arizona | 10 | 5 | 0 | .667 | 394 | 306 |
| San Francisco | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 377 | 334 |
| e-Seattle | 5 | 10 | 0 | .333 | 306 | 307 |

e-Eliminated from playoffs

x-clinched playoff spot

y-clinched division

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Woods’ results inspire hope, his words offer caution

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—The moment offered great hope for the immediate future of Tiger Woods.

Golf had gone all year without his blazing red shirt on Sunday and suddenly it had two of them. Woods and 12-year-old son Charlie, decked out just like Dad, headed down the 18th fairway tied for the lead in the PNC Championship, and for a moment the unthinkable seemed possible.

Winning—no matter that it was a scramble—in his first tournament in the 10 months since a car crash that mangled his right leg?

But then Woods missed the green to the right, both chipped too strong trying to hole it for eagle, both missed birdie putts and par was never going to be enough. The championship belt went to John Daly and his college son.

The words asked for restraint.

“No, no, no, no,” Woods said with a smile.

The topic was an observation from Matt Kuchar, who played with Woods in the final round and suggested that walking aside, his game and swing looked ready for the PGA Tour.

“I totally disagree. I’m not at that level. I can’t compete against these guys right now. No,” Woods said.

For those keeping track, that



Tiger Woods hugs son Charlie Woods on the 18th green after the second round of the PNC Championship golf tournament, Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021, in Orlando, Fla.

was his fifth “No.”

“It’s going to take a lot of work to get to where I feel I can complete against these guys and be at a high level,” Woods said, and then he was gone.

He at least ended the year on an uplifting note.

This might not seem like much, but it was the 26th consecutive year that Woods played at least one tournament as a pro. That didn’t seem likely after images of his crumpled SUV at the bottom of a hill in the Los Angeles suburbs and words like “comminuted open fractures,” medical speak for a bone broken in at least three places that

broke through the skin.

Woods also has said amputation was on the table. Word on the medical street is the “Tiger Woods of doctors” were on duty when he was brought in. Lucky man.

And then 10 months later, he and his son played bogey-free (that was one of their goals) and had a great time (that was the other goal), finished at 25-under par in 36 holes, made 11 straight birdies and nearly won the tournament.

“The competitive juices, they are never going to go away,” Woods said. “This is my environment. This is what I’ve done my entire life. I’m just so thank-

ful to be able to have this opportunity to do it again.”

Golf doesn’t often make the front of sports pages, and never in December.

Welcome back, Tiger.

And so the next step, naturally, was to wonder when he would return. Woods doesn’t know, and neither does Lee Trevino.

The second question is where, another mystery.

Woods is forever linked with the Masters, where he delivered a watershed moment in golf history with his 12-shot victory in 1997 at age 21, and where he returned from four back surgeries to win a fifth

green jacket in 2019.

The first round of the 2022 Masters is 107 days away, and Woods said he never took a day off during rehab. So who knows? But walking is a big part of playing, and Woods was in cart at the PNC Championship. Augusta National is the prettiest garden and the toughest walk.

Ian Poulter was contemplating this while watching Woods play on Saturday. Up the steep hill on No. 1, down the hill on No. 2, up the hill on No. 3, down and then up on No. 4. On and on he went until it was suggested the par-3 12th over Rae’s Creek was a fairly easy walk.

“You do have the bridge,” Poulter said, grinning because the point had been made.

Southern Hills, the site of the 2022 PGA Championship, is a fairly easy walk, once players get down the massive slope from the first tee, meaning they eventually have to go back up.

The steepest climb at St. Andrews, which is holding the 2022 British Open, is getting out of the pot bunkers (Woods didn’t hit into any of them when he won by eight shots as a 24-year-old in 2000).

About all Woods knows concerning his future is that he won’t be playing a full schedule ever again. He will have to pick the spots. “And even then,” he said, “my body might not cooperate.”



Participants of the Oceania Virtual Championships line up for a group shot during the start of the meet last Nov. 29 at the Oleai track and field.

THEODORE

From Page 20

meet in November, the spread of COVID-19 in the commu-

nity drastically changed their schedule.

“With the recent situation in our community we had to modify the actual event date

and events as some of our officials and athletes were not available,” he said.

Last October, Oceania Athletics announced it will be

conducting its regional championships online through the 2021 Oceania Athletics Virtual Championships.

“With the world, and espe-

TABA

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had to endure due to onset of the COVID-19 pandemic on Tinian.

“I am so sorry for all the delays and setback games but we did it. Again, thank you Guy Pudney, Heather Popa, and the entire Marpac family for this Island-wide Men’s Bud Light Basketball League. Hope that you will sponsor another league again,” he said.

Pudney is the resident manager of MARPAC, while Popa is the company’s marketing coordinator.

Pudney said MARPAC is very pleased with how the Island-wide Men’s Bud Light Basketball League turned out.

“Christopher King and the whole Tinian Amateur Basketball Association did a fantastic job in running the league and overcoming all obstacles that stood in their way, such as this latest CO-

VID-19 outbreak, to finally push through and complete the season. Great job by TABA and Tinian Amateur Sports Association,” he said.

He added that for an inaugural season, he feels like that the Island-wide Men’s Bud Light Basketball League acquitted itself well.

“We are glad to see Tinian being able to field eight teams to compete and hopefully next year they have a few more teams come out. A lot of great

things to build off of for next year and hopefully they keep the momentum going,” said Pudney.

MARPAC also donated beverage prizes for the Top 3 teams. The six cases of Budweiser and Budweiser Light and four cases of Aloha will be distributed following the one-game finals between Team Kio and Team Rampage tonight at the Tinian Youth Center.

Meanwhile, King thanked U.S. Marines Tristan Senter,

Jimmy Rios, and Bradyn Harvey for serving as referees this past season.

“They are leaving, too. We want to give thanks to Mr. Senter, Mr. Rios, and Mr. Harvey for helping us out with officiating the league.”

The TABA official said the three will be replaced in the championship game by Romy Libut, John Santos, and King himself with lead referee Dawn Sarmiento overseeing the entire officiating crew.

CAROL

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the team tennis competition of the 2019 Pacific Mini Games along with Sinclair and Ken Song, who will also try out for the national team.

The Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 will be held from June 17 to 25, 2022 with tennis to be played at the American Memorial Park and Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio.



**Waddle shines,
Dolphins beat
Saints 20-3 to
win 7th straight**

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Saipan Tribune Sports

**Woods' results
inspire hope,
his words
offer caution**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Carol, Robbie excited to play on home soil

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Collegiate standouts and 2019 Apia Pacific Mini Games gold medalists Carol Lee and Robbie Schorr can't wait to come home and represent the CNMI in the Pacific Mini Games next year.



The two were earlier named by CNMI national tennis coach Jeff Race as part of the four automatic slots to the CNMI National Tennis Team for the quadrennial event.

The other two are International Tennis Federation



Schorr

Men's World Tennis Tour two-time champion Colin Sinclair and Isabel Herras, who plays college tennis for Metropolitan State University of Denver.

"I am excited to play with the CNMI national team. I am looking forward on expe-

riencing my first Mini Games on my home island. It's always an honor to represent my home," said Lee.

The 5'9" sophomore at Georgia Tech University believes she's a better player now compared to her stint



Lee

in Apia, Samoa where she earned a mixed doubles gold with Sinclair.

"I think I have improved mentally, physically, and tactically in my game since Samoa. But of course, there are plenty of room for me to improve

and get stronger every day. I can really feel that I have improved," said the Saipan Community School alumnae.

The ACC Academic Honor Roll and ITA Scholar-Athlete put together a 14-12 overall singles record and

7-13 doubles mark during her freshman season.

Schorr echoed Lee when he said that he's definitely excited to play in front of family and friends for next year's Mini Games, which the islands will be hosting for the first time ever.

"I'm really looking forward to coming home and representing the CNMI on home soil. It's an honor to be one of the two automatic men's slots and for that other slot to be filled by Colin Sinclair, who is the best male player to ever come out of the CNMI," he said.

The sophomore at Pacific William Woods University added that his game has really evolved since playing college tennis in the U.S. mainland.

"I have improved a lot. College tennis has really helped," he said.

The MC/HAAC Second-Team Singles and Second-Team Doubles awardee compiled a singles record of 12-2 and a doubles record of 11-2 in his freshman year.

Schorr won a gold medal in
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OCEANIA VIRTUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Theodore Rodgers tops 200m race

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Theodore Rodgers topped the 200m event of the local portion of the Oceania Virtual Championships held starting last Nov. 29.

The 15-year-old Grace Christian Academy student completed the half circle around the Oleai track and field in 28.34. Gerald De Guzman came in second when the 24-year-old crossed the finish line in 28.97. Completing the Top 3 was Rodgers' older brother Michael who ran in a flat 31.00. Dandan Middle School teacher Simon Necesito also took part in the race and came in at 32.07.

"I'm very surprised on this win. It was very different from the usual meets I've been at as there not many people there," said Rodgers.

Aside from training at home by getting up bright and early at 5am every day, Rodgers said he also got ready



From left, Theo Rodgers, Gerald De Guzman, and Michael Rodgers in action during last week's 200m event of the Oceania Virtual Championships.

LAO ZHANG

for the virtual meet by going to the track and working out with Northern Marianas Athletics developmental coach Elias Rangamar.

Rodgers also dedicated his win in the 200m to his brother

for "helping me train and practice the forms for running."

The younger Rodgers also was the lone competitor in the 400m and broke the tape in 1:03.27.

Results of the 100m, 800,

and 1,500m will be reported in tomorrow's issue of Saipan Tribune.

NMA secretary general Robin Sapong said while they intended to host the virtual
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From left, referees Tristan Senter, Jimmy Rios, Christopher SN King, and Dawn Sarmiento during a break at officiating a recent game in the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League. Not in photo is referee Bradyn Harvey. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TABA thanks MARPAC for sponsorship

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



The Tinian Amateur Basketball Association extended its appreciation to Marianas Pacific Distributors Inc. for sponsoring this season's Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League.

"I would love to give a big thank you so much to MARPAC for making this league possible. The sponsorship, the donations, and the full support for our league has been awesome," said TABA president Christopher SN King.

He also apologized for the many delays the league
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